

SIGHT AND SOUND

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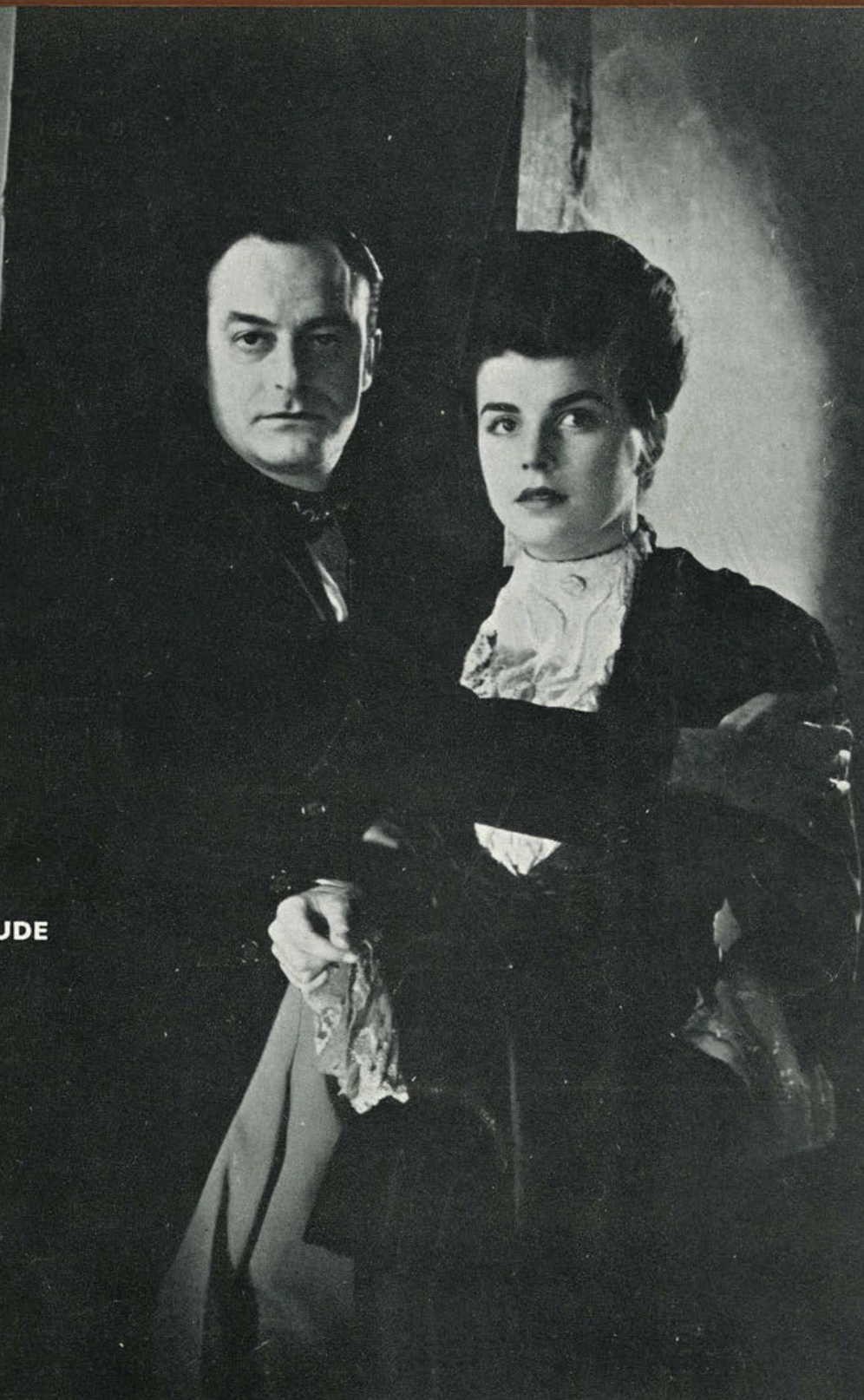
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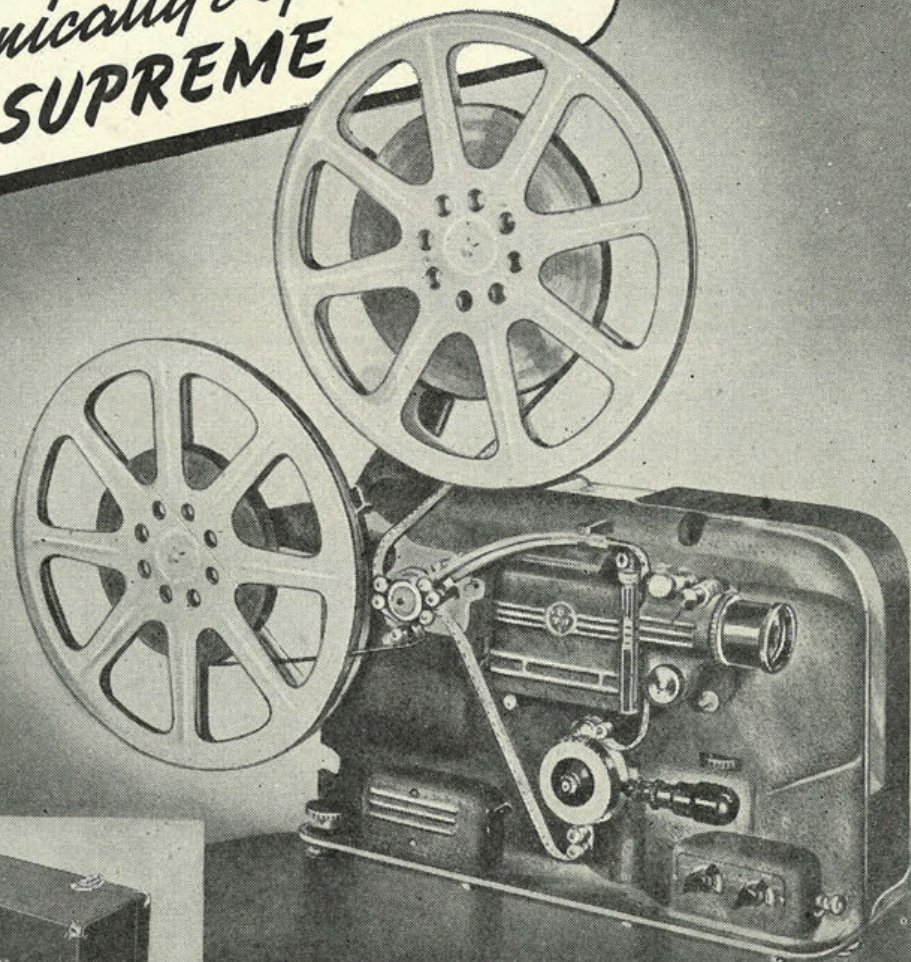
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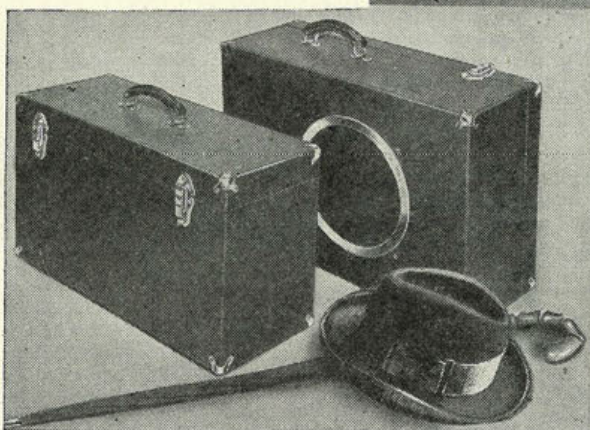
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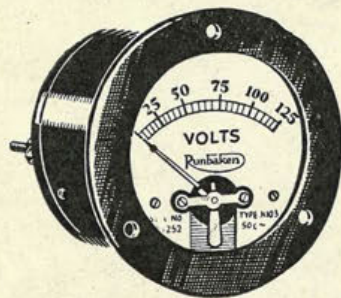
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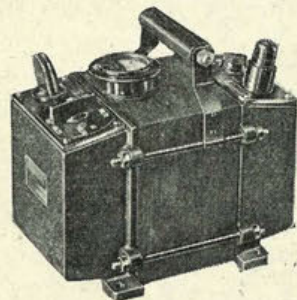
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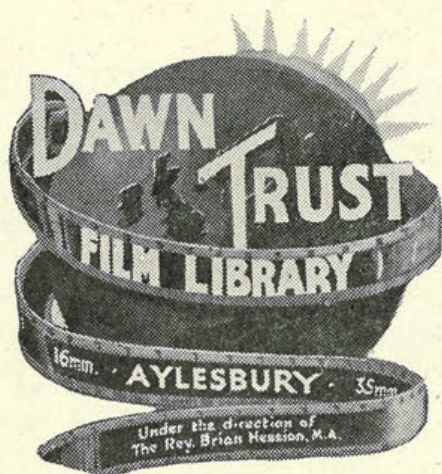
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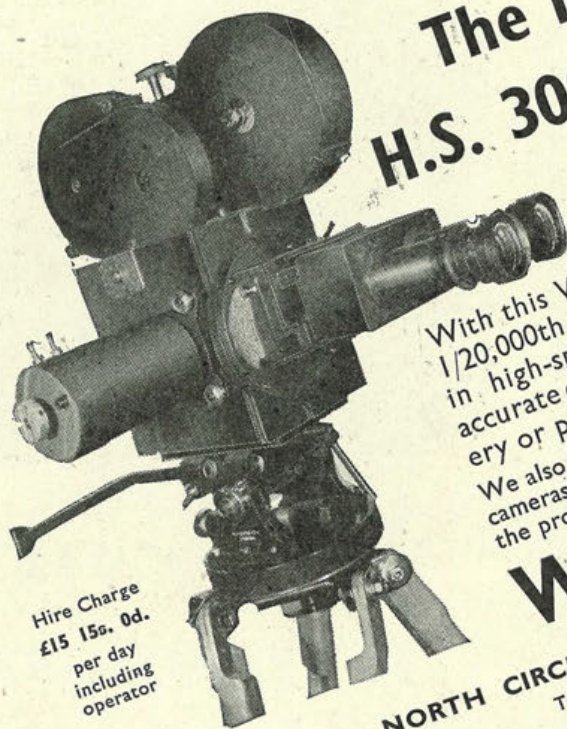
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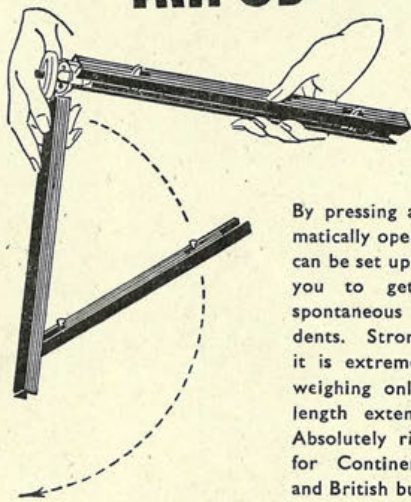
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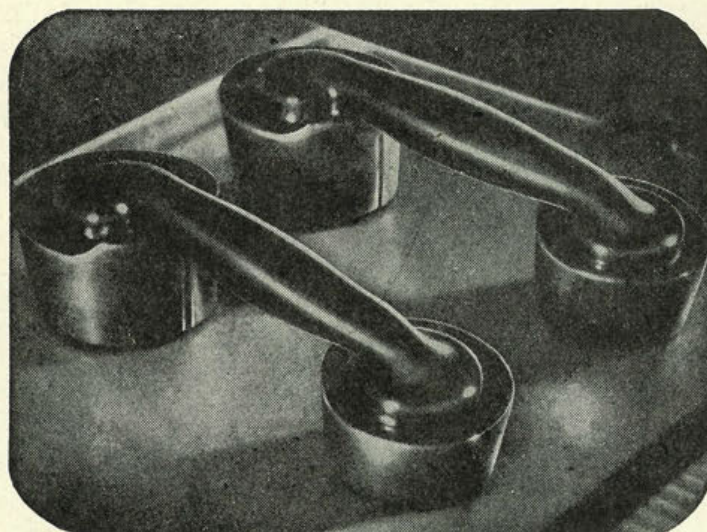
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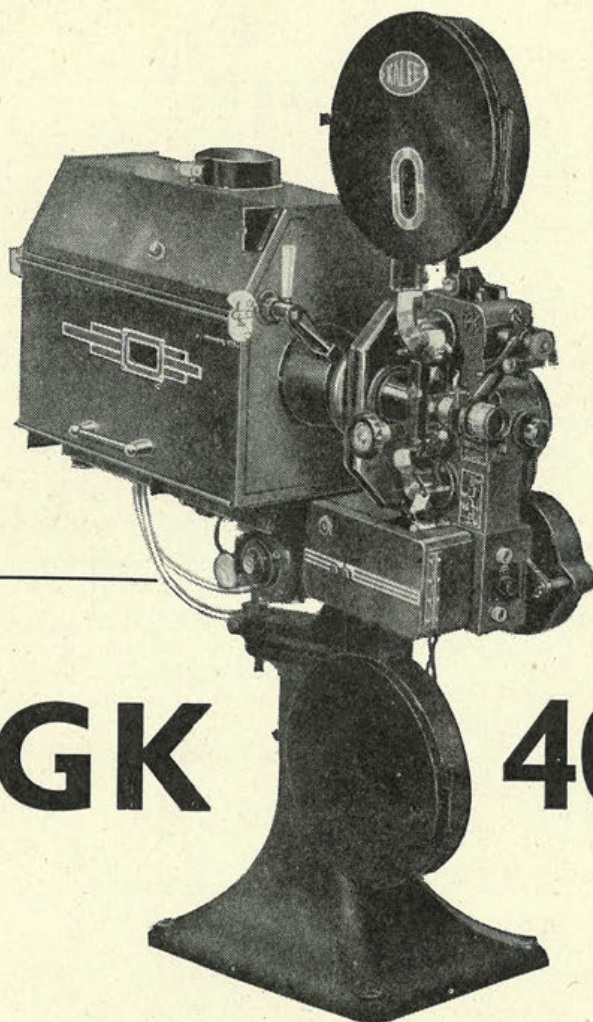
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PROPAGANDA AND THE NEWS-REEL

By G. F. SANGER

Editor of "British Movietone"

IT IS SOME MONTHS since the bogey of Propaganda in News-reels was last raised. I presume, therefore, that in asking me to write about this subject, the Editor of SIGHT AND SOUND regards it as perennial.

One point which has to be made about propaganda at once is that no two political opponents can agree upon its nature. One man's news is another man's propaganda. Coverage of Mr. Churchill appears insidious Conservative propaganda to ardent Labour men; while the devotion of news-reel footage to members of the Government is liable to make good Tories sigh and marvel that the news-reels should join in the campaign to reconcile Britain to Socialism. From the partisans, therefore, the news-reel companies must always expect a certain volume of criticism. The fact is that when a man or a woman becomes news, a great deal of publicity is added unto them; and the news-reels, being among the most powerful agents of publicity, may incur the wrath of those who for one reason or another don't particularly like the gentleman or lady in question.

However, let us make the attempt to be completely dispassionate and refer to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. "The purpose of propaganda is to influence opinion and conduct" records Volume 18 of that authoritative tome. It follows that if an Editor sets before himself the avoidance

of propaganda, he will do nothing consciously which will influence opinion.

LEGITIMATE FUNCTIONS

This is almost an impossibility, short of being completely fatuous and forfeiting all claim to the respect of audiences. Merely to represent existing conditions in a favourable light must surely be a case of "influencing opinion"; and any pleasant news-reel picture of the opening of Parliament, the Highland Gatherings, the "Britain Can Make it" Exhibition, or even the Colchester Oyster Feast becomes immediately suspect. Getting down to fundamentals one may ask: would a news-reel not be denying a great many of its legitimate functions if it did not record events which conduce to the upholding of established institutions? Such as the monarchy, the Christian religion, democratic Government, the rule of law, the trades unions and (by no means least) the Liberty of the Press? To show all these institutions in a favourable light is to create confidence in them, and to that extent is propaganda.

Carry the argument a little further. Very general agreement is found at the present time on the desirability of establishing a reasonable peace settlement and of maintaining it afterwards. Most people are convinced of the

importance of the contribution towards this object which may be made by Britain and America acting in concert, by British Commonwealth holding together, and (nowadays) by Britain remaining adequately armed and equipped for any contingencies. The publicising of the activities and speeches of Mr. Bevin, Mr. Byrnes, Dr. Evatt, Field Marshal Lord Montgomery—yes, and of Mr. Churchill's tour in the U.S.—helps to influence opinion in furtherance of the Western Democracies' bid for a just and durable peace settlement. Very few critics would arise to call news-reels to order for indulgence in such propaganda.

MANY EXAMPLES

Next example. Britain is impoverished by the war. She must earn dollars to pay for imports of food and raw materials. Her manufactured products must be diverted to export. Would a news-reel not be neglecting its duty if it did not combine with newspapers and radio in explaining why this is so, and illustrating the explanation? Furthermore, there is a very great need to step up the production of these exportable manufactures, and a Government production drive is in operation. Were the news-reels wrong to support this drive with their pictures and commentary? Are the news-reels wrong in dealing with a similar campaign to increase the coal output? On the tonnage of coal won from British collieries this winter may depend the continuance of the production drive as well as the warmth of British homes.

Examples could be multiplied of cases where the effect of pictures and commentary may—indeed must—be studied with the deliberate intention of creating a certain reaction in the audience. The truth is that every picture exhibited must have some effect, that in very many cases the effect must be to influence opinion, and an editor cannot divest himself of his responsibilities by pretending that they don't exist.

He has to decide what causes it shall be the incidental effect of his news-reel to promote. Beginning with the safest choices, he can plump for those which are concerned with the political virtues—with sympathy for the afflicted and the underdog, with loyalty towards old friends and contractual undertakings, with submission to the law, with courage in adversity, with public-spiritedness. These are in the category labelled "unanimous".

Next he may decide to publish pictures which explain or illustrate some measure taken or proposed by established authority (the Government, and its numerous departments). If he can be sure that this measure will eventually commend unanimous support, he will once again have performed an unquestioned service.

PURSUIT OF "OBJECTIVITY"

Beyond this point editorial judgment has to operate very keenly, and this is where the pursuit of "objectivity" begins. Since every shot and every word must create some effect, it is a general practice, where a subject verges on controversy, to set off a picture or a sentence which may operate one way with a picture or a sentence which may operate in the contrary sense. By employing the "objective principle", a perfect equation is produced (we 'ope). Some controversial subjects thrust themselves so prom-

inently into the news that to ignore them is the part of cowardice. The nation's food has been one such subject. When Sir Ben Smith reduced rations in the Spring, British Movietone News published the interview in which he explained why he was doing it. We also included a statement by a dissatisfied housewife. The side-by-view treatment of a controversial topic was according to the objective principle.

However, it was not regarded as such by vocal protagonists of Sir Ben Smith, who took the view that by putting the housewife's statement last we had given her the last word. The incident excited Miss Jennie Lee, M.P., who attacked us in the *Tribune* a few weeks before that lively Labour weekly was itself calling for the resignation of Sir Ben.

LIBERTY

But to return to the Editor's problem. There are some matters, as we have seen, which command so much unanimity that no question of improperly influencing opinion can possibly be raised. There are others in the embryonic stage, which appear so salutary that editorial judgment may presume public sanction. There are some to which, bordering on controversy, the objective principle has to be applied, bending over backwards if necessary. Does this exhaust the range of the news-reels?

How about the liberty to express views, unequivocally and unobjectively—that sacred right known as the Liberty of the Press? Is a news-reel to be excluded from this sacred principle of British democracy?

Whenever the bogey of Propaganda in News-reels is raised, it is usually because some news-reel has dared to avail itself of this liberty to express itself. "Propaganda", says the *Encyclopædia Britannica* in a further passage explaining how the word has acquired an invidious meaning, "has come to be looked upon as mere advocacy of special interests or as an attempt to gain evidence for statements partially or wholly untrue", and those who arise to lambast the news-reels for indulging in propaganda, try to pin "advocacy of special interests" upon the offending news-reel's expression of views.

MY OWN OPINION

Without committing any of my colleagues, let me give my own opinion upon this thorny matter. The Liberty of the Press should be sustained in its extension to the news-reels, and the film industry—exhibitors as well as renters and distributors—should back the Newsreel Association to the hilt in maintaining the principle inviolate. But editors of news-reels should recognise those limitations involved in their medium which do not affect newspapers. They should be very, very sure that they are right before they depart from the objective principle.

But, finally, there are occasions when an individual charged with a responsibility must flout what he knows will be popular opinion and preach an unwelcome gospel. That is what Mr. Churchill was doing in the nineteen thirties, and it is a constant source of regret to me that we, who had the news-reel pictures of Nazi bellicosity, did not do more in those days to draw public attention to their significance.

A NOTE ON AN IDOL

*D. W. Griffith, idol of millions of filmgoers
and one of the great pioneers of the cinema,
had his feet of clay*

By PETER NOBLE

*The still is from the Griffith film "One Exciting Night,"
issued in 1924.*

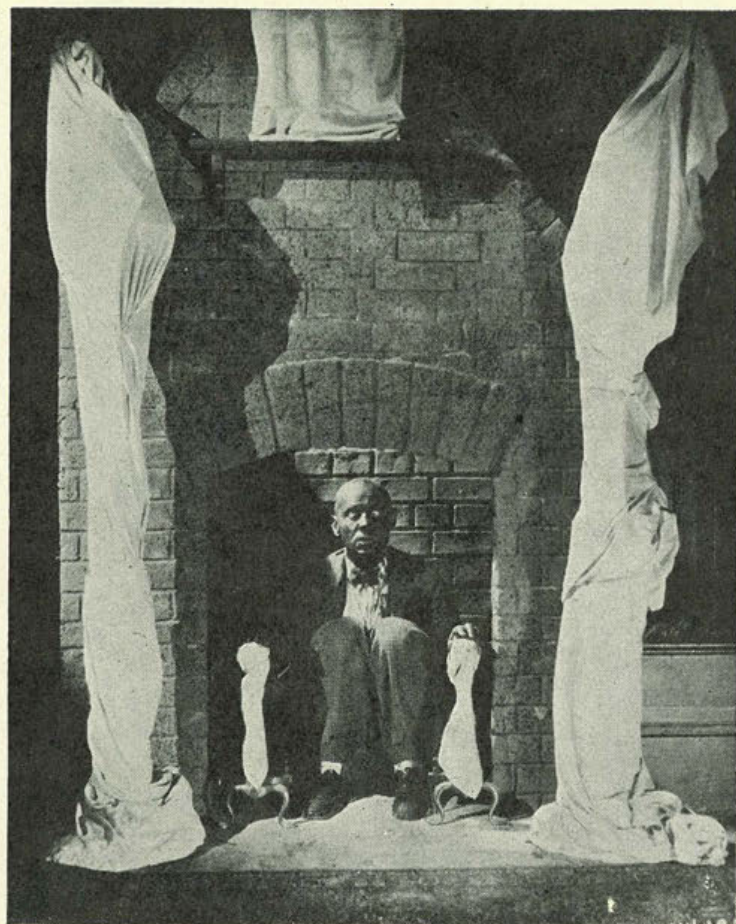
genius, but however great the workmanship, however inspired the direction and however remarkable the acting and production of the film, the fact remains that for sheer vicious distortion *The Birth of a Nation* heads the considerable list of American motion pictures which have consciously maligned the Negro race.

OBSESSIONS

The great theme of "The Clansman" covered the eventful period of the American Civil War, tracing the history of two families, one from the North and another from the South, who are estranged by the struggle. We see the happy home in Piedmont of the Southern Colonel with the inevitable stereotypes, the obsequious black Mammy and the faithful Negro retainer. But after we come to the defeat of the South and the period of Reconstruction Griffith allows his imagination to run riot. The Northern politician, Stoneman, a liberal who is in favour of complete emancipation for the Southern Negroes, is depicted as an egotistic and scheming rascal, while his associate, Silas Lynch the mulatto, is shown in a most unfavourable light. When Stoneman becomes the Lieutenant Governor of Piedmont the Negroes, the former slaves, begin to run riot under the new regime; while the Yankee politician, nothing more than a villainous careerist, and the "renegade" Negro leader Lynch plot together to enforce a "black stranglehold" (Griffith's own description) on the defeated South. Also Lynch's lust it seems extends not only to power but to the daughter of Stoneman, and in the final reel the inevitable rape attempt occurs. Villainy and rape—the two main attributes of the coloured man (according to Griffith).

This pathological obsession of some Americans with the Negro rape of white women is remarkable and appears to have occurred with astonishing frequency in American literature of the past hundred years. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* made history in that it marked its first appearance on the screen, not once but twice! In addition to Silas Lynch's attempted rape of Elsie Stoneman, there is also the scene where the Negro Gus, a villainous, frothy-mouthed, pop-eyed caricature (played, incidentally, by a white actor in black-face), drives the Little Colonel's sister to her death in an attempt to outrage her.

In all the sequences dealing with the South the coloured people are shown as swaggering black toughs, elbowing white women off the pavements and indulging in all kinds of brutalities to their former white masters. For example, we see the Negro Parliament in session. Here "the new tyrants of the South" (to quote Griffith again), hold sway, lounge back in their chairs, their bare feet up on their desks, a bottle of whisky in one hand and a leg of chicken



GRIFFITH HAS ONE OF the great poetic minds of the cinema. He ranks with Chaplin, Von Stroheim and René Clair among the immortals of the screen, and it is in no way meant to decry his genius that I draw attention to a facet of his work which has not been fully examined. I refer to his anti-Negro bias, as demonstrated in that otherwise superb film *The Birth of a Nation* and in such of his later films as *One Exciting Night*. He is indeed a pioneer, but a pioneer of prejudice!

The Birth of a Nation is one of the cornerstones of the cinema as we know it now. It is a magnificent and impressive film, containing many lessons applicable to modern film production. Griffith pioneered a number of techniques still used in film-making today, and the immense sweep and power of this epoch-making production (as well as such others as *Intolerance* and *Orphans of the Storm*), will always reserve for him a place among the great ones of the silent screen.

Yet the film has a certain unsavoury significance which cannot be forgotten when its subject, racial intolerance, is still as urgent today as it was when Griffith directed *The Birth of a Nation*. It was, indeed, the first important movie to devote much of its length to an attack on Negroes, and the monumental achievement of this film was, in the opinion of many critics, marred by its vicious distortion and strongly partisan attitude. Griffith was himself a Southerner, brought up with the conventional Southern States attitude to the coloured man and steeped in an atmosphere of racial hatred. In the majestic sweep of Thomas Dickson's novel "The Clansman" he probably envisaged perfect material for a large-scale epic, and certainly the resultant production was technically and artistically far ahead of any other motion picture of that period. It must be acknowledged that Griffith was a

in the other. These black monsters are not interested in affairs of State; they desire only revenge on the whites, and content themselves with planning retaliation and intimidating white girls with nods, winks and lewd suggestions. This then is the manner in which Griffith handles the first historical attempt by the American Negroes to govern themselves in that tragic post-war period. The monstrous caricatures of coloured politicians, officials, army officers, soldiers and servants in this film rival anything seen on the screen since that time, with the possible exception of *So Red the Rose* and *Gone With the Wind* (both based on novels by Southerners).

The final reel of *The Birth of a Nation* shows that "heroic" organization, the Klu Klux Klan, sweeping the rebellious blacks out of town. A group of coloured soldiers are besieging a hut where the proud and heroic Cameron family is fighting for its very life; as the murdering Negroes, with bulging eyes and fanatical cries, are breaking down the door for the final kill the white-hooded Klu Klux Klan ride to the rescue. To a burst of Wagnerian music the hooded saviours of the South sweep magnificently over the hill, saving the white family from the black terror. Such a distortion has indeed to be seen to be believed, remembering that the Klan invented that fine old Southern custom of lynching! Many younger filmgoers who have been told about *The Birth of a Nation* are by no means aware of its almost unbelievable viciousness.

As Lewis Jacobs writes in "The Rise of the American Film": "The film was a passionate and persuasive avowal of the inferiority of the Negro. Its viewpoint was narrow and prejudiced. . . . The social implication of this celebrated picture aroused a storm of protest in the North".

Indeed it did; in California the film was banned and it was also refused a licence for exhibition in a dozen other states. Such prominent American leaders as Oswald Garrison Villard, Jane Addams and Charles Elliot spoke bitterly and often against the showing of the film. The Liberal magazine "The Nation" described it as "improper, immoral and injurious, a deliberate attempt to humiliate ten million American citizens and to portray them as nothing but beasts".

Historians were quick to point out the many inaccuracies in the film, and generally the effect of Griffith's film upon intelligent people was that of antagonism and indignation. Griffith himself was greatly incensed by the attack on his beloved film and for many years referred to the public protest as deliberately unfair, even going so far as to write and distribute a pamphlet entitled "The Rise and Fall of Free Speech in America", which included quotations from magazines and newspapers which had endorsed his film and an impassioned defence by the director. Protests apart, however, *The Birth of a Nation* caused a sensation and was successfully shown for the next fifteen years, an admitted landmark in film history. But Griffith, who had poured all his spirit into the film, was greatly influenced by the storm which followed its showing. It is said that he relented somewhat and three years later, in 1918, in *Hearts of the World* he inserted a sequence showing a dying Negro soldier crying for his mother, and a white comrade kissing him as he died. It was a shamelessly sentimental scene, and as Richard Watts, Jr., film critic of "New Theatre", remarked "It was a pretty shoddy and futile effort to make up for what he had done in *The Birth of a Nation*". In Britain the latter film was received with enthusiasm, but many critics attacked it for its unfair

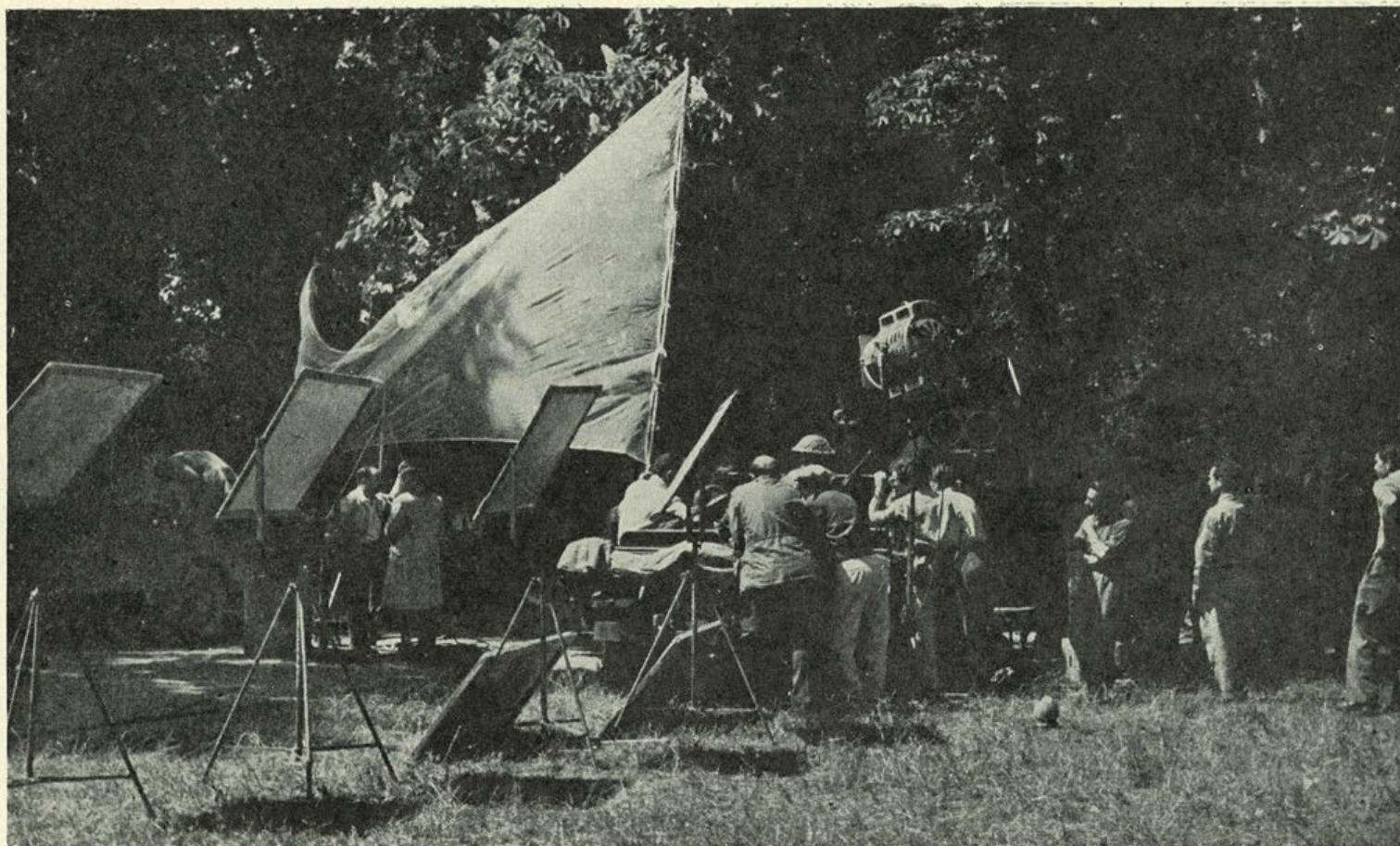
handling of a great theme. Oswald Blakeston remarked in "Close Up", August 1929: "As a spectacle Griffith's production was awe-inspiring and stupendous; but as a picture of Negro life it was not only false but it has done the Negro irreparable harm. And no wonder since it was taken from a purile novel, 'The Clansman', a book written to arouse racial hate by appealing to the basest passions of the semi-literate".

THIRTY YEAR CONTROVERSY

The film has caused controversy for thirty years; as late as 1931 it was banned in Philadelphia, after the Mayor had declared it "prejudicial to peace between the black and white races". It is surely ironic that a film which was an enormous financial success and which established Griffith as one of the greatest film directors of all time should have this blot upon its name, and it is indeed a pity that a film which occupies a place of honour among the memorable achievements of the cinema could still bear such responsibility for a great and incalculable harm. Thirty years ago it constituted a direct incitement to race riot, and seeing it today still tends to leave a nasty taste in the mouth.

In 1922 Griffith directed *One Exciting Night*, perhaps the first, certainly the most striking, example of the use of the Negro as the contemptible comic relief. It provides an interesting sidelight on how a director steeped in anti-Negro prejudice can influence his audience. The coloured character in this film, played incidentally by a white actor in black-face—since Griffith apparently would never employ a Negro actor in any role of prominence—commenced the long line of those well-known screen puppets, the cowardly black men whose hair turns white or stands on end when they meet danger in any form. They are afraid of the dark, of thunderstorms, of fire-arms, of animals, of police, and so on. In this film, Griffith showed how to portray the coloured man as a figure of contempt, and for his treatment of the Negro character in *One Exciting Night* he must be accorded the dubious honour of having commenced the long, long trail of celluloid depicting the Negro as a frightened, shivering wretch, lily-livered, weak-kneed, stupid and almost bestial. In *The Birth of a Nation* Griffith portrayed the coloured man with hatred, and nine years later, in *One Exciting Night*, with contempt. He had made some "progress". (And yet he had the presumption to make a film called *Intolerance*!)

At a time when a spate of lynchings in the Southern States and the race-proud and fascist outpourings of such American politicians as the notorious Senator Bilbo it is well to reflect what harm can be wrought by films. It is now a truism to remark, as Thomas Edison once did, "Whoever controls the motion picture industry controls the most powerful medium of influence over the people", for this is well-known and accepted; but it is not perhaps realised to what extent Hollywood has contributed towards the existence of renewed racial prejudice. Today, in these turbulent post-war years, thirteen million Negroes in the United States are waiting anxiously. They want to know whether they are to become full citizens of the U.S.A., or return to those dark days before the war, times of persecution and injustice. And it is as well at this time to take stock of Griffith's contribution to past prejudice. Their artistic merit apart, his two films *The Birth of a Nation* and *One Exciting Night* form the feet of clay of this idol of the cinema, and his shortcomings must never be forgotten whenever his genius is referred to.



Shooting in the Pitti Gardens, Florence

SEVEN AMERICANS

The story of the sequel to "Open City"

By HUGH BARTY KING

WHEN G.I. ROD GEIGER went back home after a couple of years army service in Italy in the summer of '45, it wasn't souvenirs of old Italy he packed in his duffel bag to show the neighbours, but a product of the new Italy, which he then proceeded to show the whole of America.

When Geiger was in Naples he met a man called Roberto Rossellini who was making a film about life in Rome under the German occupation. The film featured the activities of anti-Fascist underground gangs and the efforts of the Nazi and Fascist police to stop them. A revue comedienne, Anna Magnani, and a Neapolitan comedian, Aldo Fabrizi, both played straight, dramatic roles as a tenement-house mother and a priest who, embroiled in the underground movement, paid the supreme penalty—a couple of very moving performances.

Roma Città Aperta, as this film was called, was the first of its kind, and Geiger was so impressed by its sincerity and technical brilliance, to say nothing of the poignant story of bravery and stubborn resistance by ordinary, unheroic people, which it had to tell, that he was determined that America should see it too.

So into his duffel bag, G.I. Rod, *en route* for home and demobilisation, stuffed the seven big round tins containing a print copy of *Roma Città Aperta*.

Once in the States again and demobilised, Geiger formed a corporation which he called "Foreign Film Productions", to edit the film for English-speaking audiences and get it shown throughout the country. As *Open City*, Rossellini's masterly production, the first picture from the new Italy to be shown in America, was a sensation. Critics praised it unstintingly; Dorothy Thompson devoted her entire daily column to it.

Encouraged by the success of *Open City* and the rightness of his own judgment, Geiger decided to contact Rossellini again and induce him to make another film in Italy, to be financed by his own American company and by Italians.

In January of this year "Mr." Geiger, chairman of "Foreign Film Productions Inc.", returned to Italy, contacted Rossellini, and in no time the idea of the new film had been mapped out. He brought with him a good supply of film stock and half a dozen American actors and actresses.

The new film has the Italian campaign as background, but it is in no way a "war film" as such. Its theme is the relationship between the people in Italy and the people in the invading armies, the British and the Americans, and the gradual *rapprochement* that came about as the whole

affair was broken down into personalities, and "the Allies" facing "Italy" became "Joe Smith" facing "Luisa Nizzi".

As to be expected from the first film of the post-Fascist era, it has a rather self-conscious political "message" from the Left, which attempts to identify the struggle of the Italian partisans with that of partisans in other countries, even though "enemy" countries, and to underline the real similarity of aim of "little people" everywhere.

The film's present title, subject to alteration, is *Paizan*, which is American slang for an Italian—like our "Wop" or "Eyetie". The word actually is a corruption of the Italian-Sicilian slang *paesan*, meaning simply a peasant. It is not likely to be shown in Italy under this title—or in England for that matter.

It is in six episodes. There is no one actor or actress who appears all through. Each is a separate story on its own, linked with news-reel, documentary shots of the Army's advance up Italy. The continuity will thus be geographical and chronological—from the invasion of Sicily up to the surrender in May, 1945.

I met the company in Florence the second week in April. Three of the episodes had already been taken, and they were in Florence shooting a fourth. They hoped to have finished the other two in a couple of months.

THE EPISODES

The first episode takes place in Sicily and recounts the adventures of a reconnaissance patrol of eight G.I.'s. the night after the landing and the first meeting of an American soldier with an Italian girl, who vainly tries to protect him and gets shot by the Germans for her trouble.

The second shows what happened to a negro Military Policeman (played by a coloured actor "Dots" Johnson), who gets drunk one night in Naples and is befriended by a little Neapolitan street urchin who takes him down to the caves underneath the town where all the bombed-out population are living.

I saw some "rushes" of this sequence screened in Florence, and there was some excellent stuff among them. It's difficult to tell from "rushes", but if the rest of the film is up to this standard, *Paizan* has a healthy future.

One of the best scenes in the Naples sequence I am told was taken in the famous little marionette theatre, the "San Carlino".

The third episode to be shot was taken at a monastery at Maiori, just next door to Amalfi, on that lovely bit of coast opposite Capri. This will be the fifth sequence in the film as finally mounted, and will be represented as taking place in a monastery near Bologna. It features an Army Roman Catholic chaplain (played by an old American character actor, Bill Tubbs), a Protestant chaplain and a Jewish chaplain, both of whom are played by "the real thing".

The three meet in the monastery during the campaign and the head monk at first blames the Catholic padre for being so friendly with the other two and for failing to convert them to the Roman faith. He is soon made to realise, however, that the experiences they have been sharing in battle have made them appreciate more what they have in common than their differences. Fundamentally they are all after the same thing; and the comradeship of war has cemented their faith in the basic spiritual values, twisted

and stultified by the ages, but unearthed by the ever-recurring and unchanged challenge of Death Round The Corner.

The Florence episode (the fourth), which they were shooting when I met them, concerns an American nurse (played by Harriet White, a repertory actress). As an art student in Florence before the war, she fell in love with an Italian boy and she gets herself posted to Italy out of curiosity to see him again. There she learns that he is a partisan on the other side of the front line and she makes her way into occupied Florence, only to find that he has been killed "in the Cause". Her rather frivolously conceived journey to Italy becomes an eye-opener into the realities of Civil War and makes her realise that their cause is hers as well. Other scenes in this sequence will be taken in the Boboli Gardens behind the Pitti Palace.

AUTHENTIC

The Rome sequence (the third) features another young American actor, Gar Moore, playing a G.I. who comes back to Rome to look for an Italian girl he has fallen in love with, to learn that she is a prostitute. In the final episode two American actors, Dale Edmunds and Anthony La Pinna, play a couple of U.S. officers liaising with the partisans up on the Po Delta, just before the armistice.

The script has been "formulated" by Federico Fellini, who had a hand in *Open City*, but it is really a co-operative effort. The story each episode tells is a true one, based on facts and incidents related by people who saw them and took part in them. In many cases these people, like Renzo Avanzo, re-act the part they played in the war for the film.

Rossellini's method is to attain *actualità* rather than acting. After the manner of the early Soviet films, he aims at directing natural, real-life types—like the little Neapolitan urchin, the monks at Maiori, the Sicilian signorina, the Florentine partisans—and inspiring them to produce spontaneous, lively effects, in harmony with the sincerity of the story and the earnestness of the "message" it is aiming at putting across.

The film is being shot in actual settings, not built-up sets (save probably in the night-club scene in the Rome episode). Thus all backgrounds, as well as the greater part of the actors, will be authentic.

The film will be finally mounted and cut in the U.S., although Rossellini will naturally have a say in the preliminary cutting before it goes over.

Every now and again when it was convenient, sound and dialogue was recorded at the time of shooting; but most of the film will be post-synchronised. The sound track will be in Italian and American—the Italians speaking Italian and the Americans American. In the edition which will be shown in U.S. an English translation of all Italian dialogue will be added in caption form underneath to the parts concerned; and in the edition for Italy captions in Italian will translate all English dialogue.

As one who has had opportunity of seeing some of the early uncut results and of talking to Rossellini and watching him at work—and as one who saw and admired *Roma Città Aperta* in its original form—I think America should await his new offering *Paizan* with more than normal expectation. I only hope Mr. Geiger will give us a chance of seeing it in England too.

ATMOSPHERE EROTIC

HERMAN G. WEINBERG

writes from America

ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE, in my review of Jean Benoit-Levy's new book, "The Art of the Motion Picture", two points are made: (a) that a good film must make itself felt by every type of audience; (b) universality makes for great films, technique being but a means to an end, and the ultimate test—how noble is that end? It is, perhaps, as arbitrary a way of evaluating films as any other, but it is as serviceable as any other, so let us see where it gets us in relation to the films of the past quarter.

Speaking of the good old days—before the Legion of Decency and the so-called Hays-Code—*The Outlaw* would scarcely have caused a ripple of excitement then. To-day it is the hottest thing on the market, both for the sensational publicity it has received as well as for the business it is doing. (Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other.) What merit has it beyond that? I saw it uncut. It has, perhaps, two or three brief moments of suggestive dialogue and two suggestive scenes. Together they total less than half of 1 per cent. of the film's total running time. Only in America could such a fuss have been made over so little, and it takes a really hypocritical mind to object to a man's life being saved through eroticism. (I wonder how many men would rather die than be saved that way.) As for the other scene, legally it's a moot point as to how suggestive it is because you don't see a thing—it's played in inky blackness and there's but one line of dialogue, which could just as strongly be interpreted to mean the reverse of what, I suppose, it obviously means. And there you are—save for the fact that the Russell girl's low-cut blouse has seemed to have kept America from a good night's rest for the past many months. Is it any wonder that the nations of the world can't get together at the Peace Conference in Paris? Each has probably got too many other irrelevant things on its mind. Apart from all this laughable nonsense (which seems to be Howard Hughes' own little joke on the American movie industry) I found *The Outlaw* possessing a lean, rangy quality, with a leisurely pace that suited it (but with an overwhelming musical score from Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* that didn't), and blessed with two ingratiating performances by the ever reliable Walter Huston and Tommy Mitchell. It's a good Western, that gets in a word for the underdog, and has even a nice touch of over-tonal montage towards the close to prove again how technique may be made to serve noble ends.

A far more suggestive film, *The Big Sleep*, has not stirred up anywhere near the fuss that *The Outlaw* did. I don't know what that proves, except how silly and pointless have been all the condemnations of the latter, and how

idiotically inconsistent are the censors. The exchange of *double entendre* between Bogart and La Bacall, where they spar amorously in the parlance of horse-racing to thinly disguise what otherwise could not be straight forwardly said, is as brazen as anything I have ever heard on the screen. This and another scene where a salesgirl in a bookshop, locks the door, draws the blinds, takes out whisky glasses and practically invites Bogart to have a "tête-à-tête" with her (besides, it's raining outside, anyway) are the two most deliberately raw passages I've seen in a long time. These have been inserted into the film for their own sake. The story, from a highly coloured mystery novel by Raymond Chandler, who is enjoying a vogue right now, is so bizarre as to defy analysis. The original was about a lot of unhealthy (mentally and spiritually) people and its whole atmosphere was sultry and oppressive. To make any sense out of the movie, it is absolutely necessary to have read the book first. It all is hardly worth the trouble unless you have a clinical interest in aberrations.

Blood-lust, as well as the other kind, is smeared all over *The Killers*, a loose-jointed, self-conscious attempt at toughness, built around a very short story by Ernest Hemingway. (At least *The Big Sleep* is taut.) It takes the producers less than one reel to show as much as Hemingway wrote—the other nine or ten reels are devoted to a series of flash-backs contrived by the scenarist to explain why the killers were after that man. There might have been any number of explanations. They didn't really need Hemingway's story, but it was a good box-office title and gave them a trick opening for the film, and Hemingway's name on a film is something, too. Films like *The Big Sleep* and *The Killers* remind me of that cynical last paragraph in the Marquis de Sade's *Justine* in which he sheds crocodile tears over the misfortunes of virtue in a wicked world. Who says crime doesn't pay? These films will earn a fortune for their investors.

That leaves us two: *Notorious*, directed to within an inch of its life by Hitchcock, after an original by Ben Hecht concerning the ferreting out of Nazi spies in South America; and *I've Always Loved You*, which appears not to have been directed, or even written, at all. This last one is about love vs. music and never (or ever, I couldn't figure out which) the twain shall meet. *Notorious* again forces another dose of sexual "beating about the bush" on us, in what has been, I must say, a most trying past three months. I refer, of course, to the highly touted kissing scenes between Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman, which, though franker than most, are embarrassing, adding nothing to the character delineation of either role. Besides, which, several moments in the old, silent *Variety*, notably the scene where Jannings puts Lya de Putti's stocking on for her, make the kissing scenes of *Notorious* look adolescent. Strip *Notorious* of its "smart" talk and you have little left of that keen, cool, ironic brain that made the still unforgettable 39 *Steps*.

Like Peter the Great opened the windows of his palace to symbolically let the wind of Western Europe blow the cobwebs out of the minds of the old, reactionary *boyars* who opposed his reforms—someone ought to open up the windows of the studios in Hollywood and let some fresh air blow in. Some of the producers might not survive this breeze, but imagine what we might expect from those who did.

PRESENT AND ACCOUNTED FOR

Harold Leonard writes on this post-war world from Los Angeles.

THOUGH it doesn't look much like it was promised, this seems to be the postwar world, and in Hollywood it's not much more spectacular in its differentness from the preceding model than anywhere else. Maybe things reconverted more easily here because—outside of Disney's, where during the war period things had gotten to be close to 75 per cent. war work and where it's 98 per cent. entertainment today—there wasn't a great deal on the product side to reconvert. Personnel-wise, the big names got back all right; also the great body of the formerly employed without too many kicks except where the years of war service had matured or advanced workers in their specialties to a point where former jobs and ranks had become anachronistic. On the other hand, people with documentary but no studio background, who had held down big jobs in Government and military film units, are finding that what with the industry's rigid departmentalization, the sometimes monopolistic union restrictions, etc.—there simply is no spot for persons with their manifold skills. An expedient being tried in many situations is going in for yourself. Directors, writers, actors—even animated cartoonists—are starting companies of their own. Consider here the new Capra, Sperling and Riskin organizations, plus the important new United Film Productions in cartoons, companies with presumably permanent structures. There are also the more personal projects, somewhat more shifting in their affiliations—the Doug Fairbanks, Jr., Melvyn Douglas-Martin Gosch, Burgess Meredith-Benedict Bogeaus, Burgess Meredith-Mac Kreindler combinations. There has been some significant moving up under old bosses too, as actor to director-actor: Robert Montgomery at Metro; writer to producer-writer: Claude Binyon (from the *Army-Navy Screen Magazine*) at Paramount; writer to director-writer: Norman Krasna (from the AAF film unit) at Warners, etc., etc.

We have been hearing a good deal of facile prediction about the effects of the war experience and in-service film work upon the peacetime expression of veterans. Below is a more modest contribution: an informal checklist of some twenty-odd returnees who have been missed, giving a word of what they did in the services, what they are doing or plan to do now that they're back in Hollywood.

LISTING

Lew Ayres, who started in films as the schoolboy hero of the pacifist *All Quiet on the Western Front* and then ran the risk of ending his career by his firm, forthright stand as a conscientious objector in the present war, is back from medical-corps service in Italy and has just finished his first post-war assignment as co-star with Olivia de Havilland in *The Dark Mirror*, under Robert Siodmak's direction. He has said that he is planning to produce and appear in a short subject which he hopes "will accomplish for world peace what Frank Sinatra's *The House I Live In* did for racial tolerance".

Harry Brown, whose principal writings in varied forms have all been about the war, i.e., "A Walk in the Sun": novel, "A Sound of Hunting": play, and "Artie Greengroin, Pfc": fictional sketches—also contributed directly to the war-time screen with Garson Kanin's and Carol Reed's *The True Glory*, for which Brown wrote the poetic commentary. He is now in Hollywood working for the new Enterprise company on the screen adaptation of Erich Remarque's latest novel, "The Other Love".

Frank Capra, one of the biggest film names to go into the war, was probably the biggest to come out, having been in charge of the Signal Corps photographic detachment which made the seven full-length "Why We Fight" films, the "Know Your Enemy", "Know Your Ally", and "Few Quick Facts" series, the several years' issues of *Army-Navy Screen Magazine*, as well as ungrouped feature pictures such as *The Negro Soldier*, *This Was Germany*, *San Pietro*, *Operation Titanic*, *Two Down and One to Go* (on demobilization procedures), the "Snafu" cartoon strip, etc., etc. On his return to Hollywood "entertainment" film making, Capra has once again taken a commanding position, this time among the new corps of independent producers. In Liberty Films, Inc., he joins with William Wyler and George Stevens in a venture where each of the three distinguished directors will have complete jurisdiction, from story selection through final mounting, over the making of three films a year. (More of Capra's aims in Liberty Films and his outlook for independent production generally, can be found in an article by him in the New York *Times* magazine section for May 3, 1946). First of Capra's own contributions to Liberty Films' output will be *It's a Wonderful Life*, starring Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed. In line with Capra's belief in the all-important post-war duty of optimism, the story deals with an ordinary man who thinks his life meaningless until he is miraculously enabled to see what might have happened to a number of good people around him had his life never touched theirs.

Melvyn Douglas, whose wartime career began so spectacularly with the big anti-Roosevelt hullabaloo over his appointment to Volunteer Talent head, Office of Civilian Defence, well before Pearl Harbour, managed to get itself quickly resumed and to stay steadily active for the duration of the war out on the wide China-Burma-India front, where Douglas headed the entertainment programme of Special Services. Demobilized in the spring of 1946, Douglas returned to put on in New York the all-GI revue "Call Me Mister". Next, he announced formation, with radio producer Martin Gosch, of a new independent film-producing company in which he should direct as well as produce and act. Douglas' active participation in the new company will not be possible, however, until he has completed two acting assignments hanging over from prewar Hollywood commitments: The first, with Metro, just winding up, is for the co-starring role with Katherine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy in *Sea of Grass*. The second, at Columbia, is to play opposite Rosalind Russell in *My Empty Heart*. Literary note: To a recent memorial symposium on Franklin D. Roosevelt (*New Republic*, April 15, 1946) Douglas contributed an appreciation of F.D.R. as "Number One Movie Fan".

Philip Dunne, scenarist of *How Green Was My Valley*, and one of the more responsible-minded of Hollywood movie-makers, left Hollywood early in 1942 to work with Kenneth Macgowan at the Coordinator's Office (films for South America), later becoming chief of film production for the Overseas Branch of the OWI. OWI-Overseas was the one unit of wartime film production in this country to make systematic use of experienced documentary-film-making talent, and it ended up for its pains with some of the most

sensitive fact films of the war. (Among OWI-Overseas documentarians were Willard Van Dyke, Irving Lerner, Alexander Hackenschmidt (now Hammid), Irving Jacoby, and Henwar Rodakiewicz; and OWI-Overseas films included *A Better Tomorrow*, *Cowboy*, *Autobiography of a Jeep* and *The Library of Congress*.) Since his return to Twentieth Century-Fox Dunne has written the screenplay for *Forever Amber*, and he is now working on the adaptation of Marquand's "The Late George Apley". His reflections on the documentary vis-à-vis the Hollywood film he incorporated into an article which appeared in the January, 1946, issue of the *Hollywood Quarterly*.

Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., had been itching even before the war to get out of mere acting and into acting plus one or more of the higher branches of film making, as direction or production. The war interposed a five-year delay; Fairbanks served in the Navy, making a distinguished record for gallantry and emerging with the rank of commander. He had *Sinbad the Sailor*, as an acting assignment, left over to finish from a prewar RKO contract—but even here he took a look in on story, editing, scoring and other extra-acting matters in the course of production. *Sinbad* finished, the new Douglas Fairbanks Corporation announced itself, together with a programme of three pictures to be made for International: First, *The Exile*, Fairbanks starring. Second, *Terry and the Pirates*, from the adventure "comic" strip by Milton Caniff, Fairbanks not to appear in it. Fairbanks to act as producer on both; Fairbanks to inch into direction by handling screen tests on the second.

John Ford, a "grand old" director at fifty, was involved with Hollywood's first home-made training films, produced under Zanuck's supervision, early in 1941. But even before this, as a Naval reserve officer, Ford had been asked to organize a reserve corps of first-rank Hollywood cameramen. And in January, 1942, Ford was already in Washington functioning with one unit of this contingent, under the then Coordinator of Information, William S. Donovan, as a kind of special film reporter for President Roosevelt. Thereafter, under assorted auspices, Ford did chores which included the 27-minute *We Sail at Midnight* (script by Clifford Odets), made jointly by the U.S. Navy and the Crown Film Unit; *December 7*, for the U.S. Navy alone, with Gregg Toland (q.v.) on camera; and the full-size Navy record film, *Battle of Midway*. Ford was also in command of the unit which put together the 8-hour compilation of Nazi newsreels and documentaries, *The Nazi Plan*, shown as an exhibit at the war-criminal trial at Nuremberg. Back in Hollywood, Ford has made *They Were Expendable*, crossing his own film path as of *December 7* via the Pearl Harbor sequences of both pictures. And he has just wound up shooting on *My Darling Clementine*, the third re-make since sound of the classic Western story, (original title, "Frontier Marshall") about Wyatt Earp and how he brought the law to Tombstone, Arizona.

John Huston, who made one reputation with *The Maltese Falcon*, which he scenarioized and directed, and a second with his excellent war films, *Report from the Aleutians*, *San Pietro* and *Let There Be Light* (the latter about neuropsychiatric procedures in Army hospitals)—is really one of our distinguished new writer-directors, not just a director, as we had been thinking. He started out as co-author, with Howard Koch, of the Woodrow Wilson play, "In Time to Come", and was screenplay-writer of such esteemed Warner Bros. films as *The Story of Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet* and *Juarez*, before he started directing. Now he is working on the screen adaptation of B. Traven's "Treasure of the Sierra Madre", that oddly translation-like novel with the underground reputation, written in English, pseudonymously, by a man of unknown nationality living near Acapulco, Mexico. The screenplay will stick to the novel's three men (no women—and none in the film, says Huston) and their search for gold in the Mexican mountain region of the title at a time following the First World War. Huston will direct, Henry Blanks will produce for Warners; and there is a good chance that the same routine will operate next for Huston with "Moby Dick".

Joris Ivens' wartime activities, fittingly enough for a documentalist, were international in scope: for Canada the four-reel convoy film *Battle Stations*; for the U.S. Signal Corps,

a great deal of work on the unreleased *Know Your Enemy—Japan*. Finally, Ivens was appointed Film Commissioner in the department of education of the newly-liberated Netherlands East Indies. Following his resignation from that post several months ago over matters of political policy, Ivens' poor health has had him taking time off from filmmaking, meanwhile finishing his autobiography. A first instalment of the latter, called "Apprentice to Films", appeared in *Theatre Arts* for March and April, 1946.

Garson Kanin, who started as a private with the Office of Emergency Management (*Ring of Steel*, *Fellow Americans*) and worked up to captain and the OWI-Overseas (*Welcome to Britain*, *Salute to France*), had a fine climax with *The True Glory*, which he produced with Carol Reed for the joint British and American information services. Kanin, of course, is the young stage director who made such a whirlwind success with the first seven screen comedies he directed for RKO between 1938 (*A Man To Remember*) and 1941 (*Tom, Dick and Harry*), when he entered the service. After discharge, Kanin went to New York, where he staged, first, Robert Sherwood's moderately successful "Rugged Path", next, his own still-running "Born Yesterday". He has just come back to Hollywood where with his wife, Ruth Gordon, he is writing an original screenplay *The Art of Murder* for International. It is naturally, a comedy and he will probably direct.

Anatole Litvak was one of Capra's main standbys at the Signal Corps plant in Hollywood, producing *Prelude to War* and *Battle of Russia* in the "Why We Fight" series and the separate *Operation Titanic* featurette on shuttle bombing. Before that, of course, Litvak was the multilingual director who made *Be Mine Tonight*, with Jan Kiepura, in Germany; *Mayerling* in France, and *All This and Heaven Too*, *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, *Blues in the Night* (the jazz film) and other films, mostly for Warner Bros., in the U.S. Now he, too, will move into the privileged producer-director class, at the new Enterprise company, for whom he will make "Coup de Grace", from the best-selling French novel by Joseph Kessel (who wrote the screenplay for *Mayerling*). Before "Coup de Grace" he is scheduled to direct a remake of *Le Jour se lève*, under the title *A Time To Kill*, for the French Hakim brothers, now producing here for RKO release. This is the now notorious project in connection with which arrangements were made for the destruction outside of France and Belgium of all prints of the excellent Marcel Carné original version.

Pare Lorentz, maker of *The River* and *The Fight For Life*, spent his two and a half years of Army service in the Air Transport Command, where he made *Over the Hump* and some 200 briefing shorts giving ATC pilots glimpses of the land and water backgrounds of our military air routes. He had expected, after winding up a Department of the Interior film chore in Washington, to settle down to the private practice of documentary film production. But he has just been appointed head of film production for the rapidly expanding Army programme of reorientation education in occupied countries. He will have power of approval on all features and newsreels to be shown in theatres of U.S.-controlled zones, and his three-million dollar budget for the first year calls for the production or compilation of some 120 reels of documentary and newsreel films about America and democracy. The films will be made in Astoria, Long Island, in Hollywood, and in former enemy studios in Germany and Japan.

Kenneth Macgowan, the former stage producer, author of books on the modern theatre, and producer of such motion pictures as the first color feature *Becky Sharp* (1935), *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939), *Man Hunt* (1941)—left his Twentieth Century-Fox office many months before Pearl Harbour to take charge of motion picture production for the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. Since his return to Hollywood he has supervised *Lifeboat* and *Jane Eyre*, among other films, helped found and served as co-editor of the *Hollywood Quarterly*. And just now he has accepted an appointment as Professor of Theatre Arts—stage, motion pictures, radio, television—at the University of California, Los Angeles campus; to discharge the duties of which he has announced his retirement from Hollywood film production.

Burgess Meredith, who was inducted as a private, pretty much acted his way up to captain in his three years of Air Force service. He appeared anonymously in innumerable training films (e.g. "What can a short man do in the Air Force"? asks a disgruntled cadet. Demonstrates pint-sized Meredith: Be a tail-gunner, . . . etc.). He had big parts in the OWI-MOI *Welcome to Britain*, the OWI *Salute to France*, lending a productional hand on both films. On his way out of the Army he was given special leave to play War Correspondent Ernie Pyle in the Hollywood film, *The Story of G.I. Joe*. First large civilian project was his independent production, with Benedict Bogeaus, of *The Diary of a Chambermaid*, starring Paulette Goddard, screen-play by himself. Next assignment was the important role of President James Madison in Universal's *The Magnificent Doll*. About now came announcement of the formation of New World Films, with Mac Kriender, of New York's smart "21" Club, and Peter Cusick, formerly of an OWI film unit—to do "prestige" films. And on the calendar for the not distant future is a trip to England to do a picture for Korda. Among continuing social-minded interests is Meredith's active sponsorship of the plan of Prof. Robert Gessner, of New York University, for film industry endowment of a chain of motion picture workshops in leading American universities.

Robert Montgomery with the end of the war got his big chance to direct. after a warming-up stunt as co-star of *They Were Expendable*, in which real-life ex-P-T-Boat Commander Montgomery got back into a sometime familiar role; Montgomery was given the cherished directing-acting assignment in connection with Raymond Chandler's mystery novel, *Lady in the Lake*. In addition to the P-T boat chapter, Montgomery's five years of service had included driving a French army ambulance, back in 1940, acting as Naval liaison officer to the American Embassy in London, in 1942, and commanding destroyer U.S.S. *Nichols* in the D-Day invasion of Normandy. He has said he likes directing fine so far, and has gone on to announce a partnership with actor-playwright-director Elliot Nugent for the production of plays on Broadway. First of these, slated for Fall, is by Ladislaus Bus-Fekete and is titled "The Big Two". Set in to-day's Austria, Russian zone, it stresses the importance of Russian-American friendship.

Robert Riskin, writer half of the famous director-writer team that made *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, *Meet John Doe*, and other successful comedies, went a separate way from Teammate Capra when war came, to become Motion Picture Division chief of Overseas OWI (Philip Dunne, under Riskin, managed the production side). Riskin continued to walk by himself at the end of the war too, setting up Robert Riskin Productions to produce Robert Riskin-written scripts. First of these, like Capra's first, will star Jimmy Stewart, and is called *Magic Town*. A romantic comedy, it is described as "reversing the usual movie formula by having its hero leave the big city to seek adventure in a small town, instead of vice-versa".

Robert Sherwood, the noted playwright ("Abe Lincoln in Illinois", "There Shall be no Night"), whose interests in late years have been increasingly political, reconverted easily from his official post of Chief, Office of War Information, Overseas Branch, and his unofficial one of sometime co-author of President Roosevelt's speeches to—in chronological order—(a) writing a play, "Rugged Path", about a newspaper man in the period of the present conflict; (b) doing the screenplay for Samuel Goldwyn's *The Best Years of Our Lives* (cf. William Wyler below); and (c) editing the letters and papers of the late Harry Hopkins.

Milton Sperling came out of the U.S. Marines—he had been for a time in the O.S.S.—to found United States Pictures, announcing as the company's first production *Cloak and Dagger*, a story about the O.S.S. Less well known before the war, Writer Sperling had attained producer status at Twentieth Century-Fox in 1941, lining up half-a-dozen production credits there before he entered the service. His biggest chore for the Marines was *To the Shores of Iwo Jima* the shooting of which, at the head of a regular combat photographic unit, he commanded himself. He also made the two-reel documentary, *The Marianas*.

George Stevens, director of *The More the Merrier* and other comedies, was in charge of one of the crack photographic teams on special or roving assignment, from the invasion of France through the first period of the German occupation. Stevens' unit photographed the signing of the German surrender; and some of his unit's experiences in the course of making the first Allied film record of the death camp at Dachau can be read about in Joel Sayre's "Letter from Germany", in the January 26, 1946, *New Yorker*. After his Army separation, early in 1946, Stevens became the third of the director trio, with Capra and William Wyler, to form Liberty Films, Inc. The first of the three pictures which he will produce and direct for the new company is a romantic period piece, *One Big Happy Family*, said to be a humorous treatment of life in a governor's mansion.

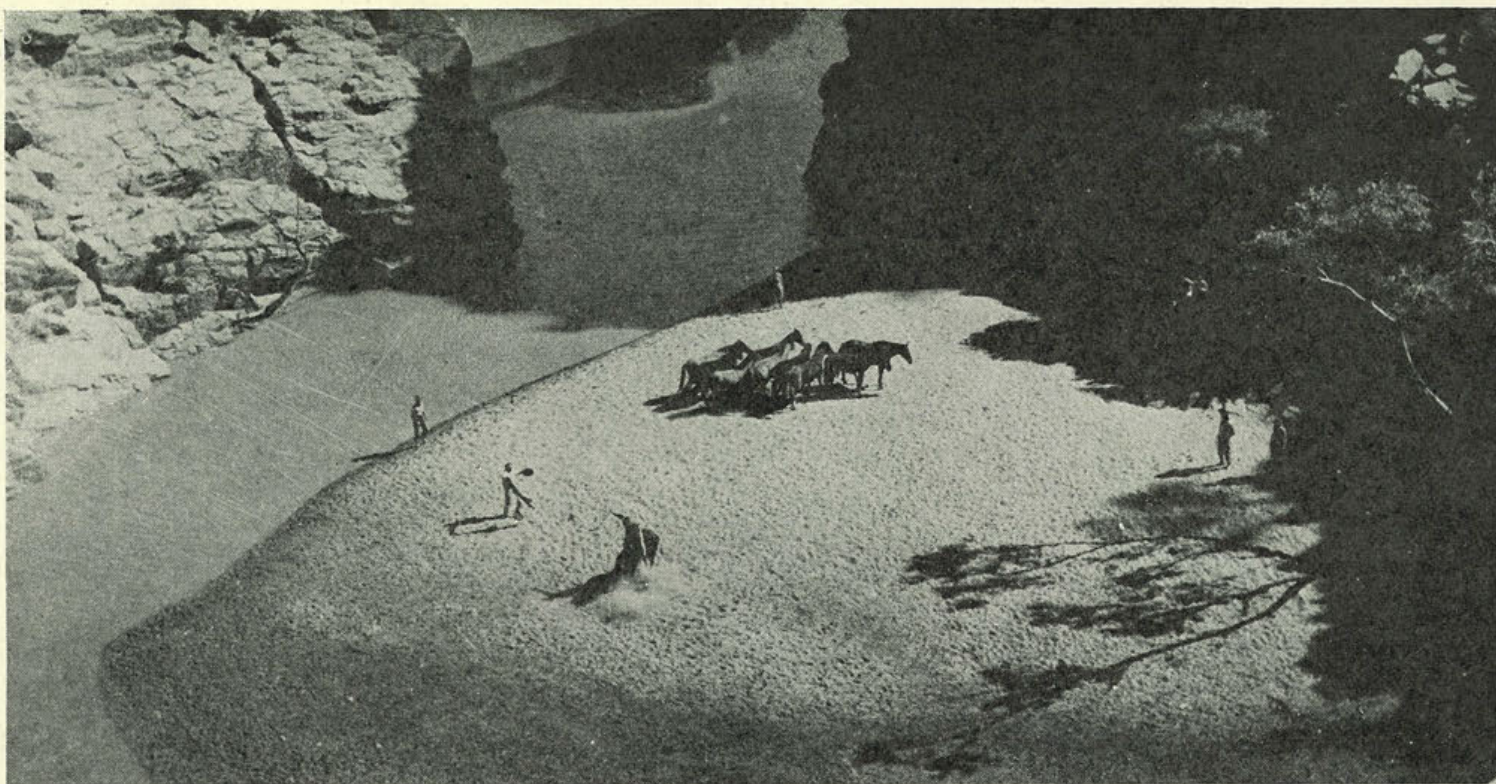
Robert Stevenson, the excellent young British director of *Nine Days a Queen* and *To the Victor*, has been rather neglected since his transplantation to America. *Jane Eyre* was his most satisfactory assignment before entering the American armed forces. Working in uniform under Capra, he made the 5-reel *Know Your Ally, Britain* and the 8-reel *This Was Germany* orientation features; also in Italy, and for the Signal Corps, 27 *Soldiers*, to correct a notion that we and the British were the only nationalities represented by armed units on that front. Now that he is back, he has been loaned by David Selznick, to whom he had been under long-term contract, to independent producer Hunt Stromberg, for whom he is directing *Dishonored Lady*. Miss Hedy Lamarr, star of the picture co-produces.

Gregg Toland, the cameraman responsible for such touchstone photographic jobs as *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Citizen Kane* and *The Little Foxes*, was one of the group of leading Hollywood photographers whom John Ford lined up as Naval reservists quite a while before Pearl Harbor. Toland was called into service, December 9, 1941, and for the next three years supervised the camerawork on a wide assortment of war-connected projects. These included 17 shorts on Brazil, made for the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, and the 4-reel documentary, *December 7*, for the U.S. Navy. Since his return, Toland has photographed the live-action sequences for Walt Disney's *Brer Rabbit* feature, and, for Goldwyn, Danny Kaye in *The Kid from Brooklyn*. He is the cameraman on *The Best Years of Our Lives* (cf. Wyler, below).

William Wyler's best post-war news is probably that, as one of the three directors forming the new Liberty Films setup, he will soon be his own producer. Wyler's active participation in the new company awaits his completion of a last picture remaining under an old contract with Samuel Goldwyn. This is the much publicised "Glory for Me" project, from the like-named novel in verse by MacKinlay Kantor, the film now carrying the title *The Best Years of Our Lives* and dealing with the readjustment problems of a group of returning servicemen. This is Wyler's first film since leaving the Air Corps, where for three years he limited himself pretty much to airplanes as subject matter. In *Memphis Belle*, one of the finest war documentaries, he photographed, in colour, the life of an air crew aboard a bomber of the England-based Eighth Air Force; and in *Thunderbolt*, a companion film about a fighter plane, was told the story of strategic air warfare in Italy. Details of his first production for Liberty Films have not yet been announced.

Darryl Zanuck, head of production for Twentieth-Century-Fox, was the first man in charge of training and civilian-morale films made in Hollywood. He went overseas early, too, and came back with practically the first full-length campaign-record film, *At the Front in North Africa*. Wilson, his first big personally supervised studio undertaking after returning to Hollywood, was said to have been abetted in its documentary overtones by Zanuck's wartime experience with fact film. Latterly, in addition to executive studio supervision of all Fox product, he has had under his personal production wing the multi-million, three-hour *Razor's Edge* transcriptoin.





The Overlanders

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HOLLYWOOD'S ART MACHINERY

By MORDECAI GORELIK

The author, writer and stage designer, was in charge of the visual side of production of "Days of Glory" and "None But The Lonely Heart"

IN SOME WAYS the Hollywood treatment of film settings casts a revealing sidelight on the general Hollywood approach to reality. The setting represents human environment—a highly important, if mute, aspect of the screen story. What happens to this part of life on its way through the camera lens? As a Broadway designer who has also worked in pictures (as film production designer), I am bound to report that any attempt to bring reality to movie settings encounters stern resistance on the big lots.

Let me say at once that this is not the fault of motion picture art directors, sketch artists or continuity artists. These men, most of them, have integrity, sound taste and great technical experience, along with the ability to turn out excellent work under pressure. Some even have that touch of genuine dramatic imagination which marks the born scene designer. In the scenic field, as in most others, Hollywood is chock full of talent.

Why, then, do discerning film critics so often find Hollywood backgrounds inappropriate or downright phoney?

The responsibility lies with the general policy of the big studios and with the department heads who enforce it.

To put it simply, the policy of glamorization extends to the setting, as it does to everything else. The studios accordingly do *not* choose their "art" department executives from among their most dramatically gifted art directors

or sketch artists. On the contrary, the nod usually goes to those who have a background of "harmonious" Prix de Rome type of architecture or of interior decoration in a style of overblown rococo.

Men of this sort are not usually inclined toward a vivid approach to life. Once behind an office desk they become concerned with problems of budget and of hire and fire. At best they are no longer active creatively, and at worst they are drudges who carry on a routine, year after year, without a single disturbing thought about the meaning of the settings to which their names are attached. In time the buttressing of their positions becomes their main business at the studios, and their departments turn into miniature empires.

This kind of setup, as is well known, exists in all departments of the movie industry; but there is a special reason why it is at its worst in the scenic field.

Of all dramatic elements the setting is perhaps least capable of being understood by the glib or untrained mind. It is certainly not understood by the average film executive, whose criteria are a natural inclination to florid bad taste in A pictures and a rather urgent appreciation of budget economies in B pictures. What the setting means as environment; the subtle relation of the setting to the style and originality of a given theme; the contribution of the setting as dramatic comment—all this is

undreamt of in their philosophy. Film producers may have definite ideas—however wrong—in their choice of individual writers, stars or directors, but when it comes to the design problem they stand in naive awe of the art department. From that mysterious realm there issues a stream of impressively technical blueprints and models whose merits are beyond the dispute of laymen. Realized on the sound stages, the designs have a “naturalism” of the era of Belasco, or else a type of chichi that flutters the heart of a Grand Rapids floorwalker. What more could anybody want?

It therefore works out that the art departments on the big lots are autonomous to an amazing degree. Scripts are fed into the hopper of the art machine and emerge as film background, with a minimum of conference between the director and the art director. Indeed, any director who feels it necessary to discuss with care the why and wherefore of the settings that are handed to him is considered something of a crackpot.

I have had talks with art department heads who are convinced that they are painstakingly realistic, in contrast to the allegedly arty and impractical designers with stage backgrounds. In practice, however, Hollywood scenic thought proceeds more often in terms of clichés than in terms of reality.

Thus, for *None But the Lonely Heart*, the RKO art department manager furnished a model of a London street which the director, Clifford Odets, had the courage to turn down. The model was “picturesque”, and the art machine undoubtedly suffered wounded feelings when Odets declared, “This place is so pretty that I’d like to live in it myself. What I want for my action is not a relic of the good old days but a relic of the bad old days. This street must be the villain of the story; it is the sinister primary reason for the whole dramatic chain of events”.

The assignment was turned over to me, and I remade the street into a typical example of rattle-trap slum housing. The honesty and relevance of the design have since been recognized not only by American audiences but by English ones. On a recent visit to England I was asked by a British studio to do a similar job on one of their pictures. This enthusiasm has so far not been shared by the RKO production heads.

WORSE TO COME

The street design was only the beginning of my differences with the art department; there was a struggle over every detail. When I insisted on plastering advertisements on the available walls of the street, I was told it would ruin the old-world atmosphere of London. Huge hoardings have been part of the “old-world atmosphere” of London slums since the days of Queen Victoria—but not to the eyes of the art department. Ma Mott’s second-hand shop, as visualized by the art executive, had the dimensions of a warehouse filled with the leavings of Du Maurier drawing rooms. I redesigned it, emphasizing its pathetic smallness and the sordid poverty of the things on sale. Promptly there were complaints that it was harder to operate the sound booms in the narrow space, and that I was slowing down production. (Incidentally the sound boom is the usual pretext for allowing the most modest interiors to assume elephantine dimensions. Hollywood will gladly spend money to make settings look lavish, but it cannot afford the money to make settings look normal.)

On another picture the same art department built a stairway that was supposed to have been constructed by guerilla fighters to replace the smashed stone staircase of a monastery in a forest. The method was to do a perfect carpentry job with dressed lumber from the studio stockpile, and then to chop up the result with axes and chisels in order to denote rude construction in time-honoured Hollywood style. It was my painful duty to interrupt this process and have the stairway rebuilt out of logs, saplings, charred timber, old doors and other material that any reasonable person would consider more available under the conditions of the story.

Perhaps such incidents explain why it is almost hopeless to expect any picture to emerge from the big studios with the startling documentary quality of *The Stars Look Down* or *Open City*.

I have cited some examples of studio practice in the matter of authenticity—a quality in which Hollywood considers itself expert. What of the more subtle use of the setting in achieving style or dramatic comment?

MORE RE-DESIGNING

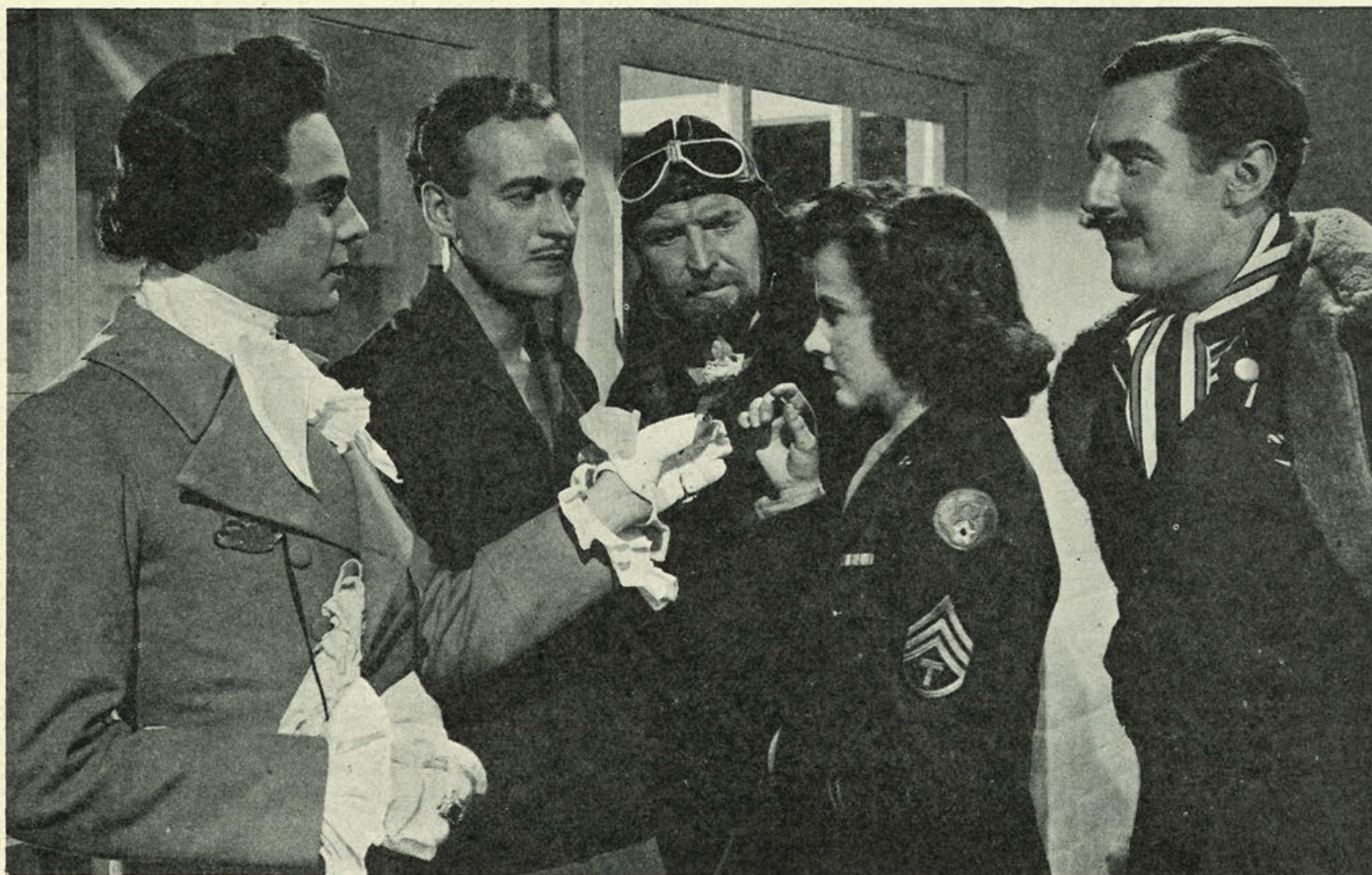
For the back alley of the Fun Fair in *Lonely Heart* the art factory offered a piece of prosaic naturalism, without regard to the fact that this alley was one of the most romantic locales in the story. Again I was obliged to redesign, curving the walls of the alley, arching it with trees, and so on. This shift toward a more poetic imagery was meaningless to the art regime.

For the beach house sequence of *Murder, My Sweet*, Adrian Scott, the producer, and Edward Dmytryk, the director, were given sketches of typical beach houses, complete with dinettes. The rather fantastic action of the sequence was incongruous in such surroundings. At Scott’s request I made suggestions which removed the curse of literalism from the designs and gave the action the theatrical quality it needed. The new design was effectively carried out, but it was at least a year before the producer dared reveal to the front office that I had had anything to do with that particular setting.

Among the more alert directors, especially the younger men, there is a growing number who find themselves hampered by the present cut-and-dried scenic method. They would like to have dramatically-minded artists work side by side with them from the script to the cutting room. The new category of “production designer”, which has arisen because of this need, is viewed with alarm by art executives, since production designers are responsible primarily to the directors and are therefore “out of control”. To insist on this new way of working with designers, a director or associate producer must have more “pull” and stamina than one ordinarily looks for on a movie lot.

However, the story is not all told. In recent years some of the best writers in the film industry have moved into directorial and producer assignments. These men are well aware of the share of the setting in the total impact of a screen story. In time the newer directors and producers will prove strong enough to make their wishes respected.

Even more important, the growth of independent film units is making it possible for designers to work with directors on individual films beyond the jurisdiction of the art machines. In the case of the setting, as in the case of all the other departments, the advent of independent companies should have a salutary effect on the future of American films.



A matter of Life and Death.

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WE ARE SUCH STUFF AS FILMS ARE MADE ON

Adrian Cairns writes a reply to the plea by Tudor Edwards for "Film and Unreality" in the summer Sight and Sound.

"MOTIVE, IT WOULD SEEM, is everything". I submit that, whatever the motive, the sight of an umbrella making love to a sewing-machine (to quote the classic example) would neither entertain me, move me nor instruct me.

The fallacy of the surrealist style of painting applies equally to surrealist films. As I see it, the *raison d'être* of surrealism is in the intellectual activity of association; the placing together of two or more apparently alien objects or scenes in order to produce an entirely new and stimulating idea. The emotion, without which there is no beauty, which may or may not accompany this association cannot be more than an obscure feeling, such as was felt by an observer of Kandinsky's stage presentation *The Yellow Sound*. It cannot compare, for instance, with the combined visual beauty, emotion and mental association shown by the last shot in *Blood and Sand* (technicolour) where the camera, shooting close up, moved slowly from the bouquet of red flowers, thrown into the arena for the new favourite, along the sand to the patch of blood left by his predecessor. Static or mobile, indirect visual terms whose association possibly leads to a meaning are no substitute for direct visual meanings in the expression of an emotion or an idea, however abstract.

Mr. Edwards himself is equally dubious about the value of obscure cinematic surrealism, so let us now examine his main proposition for having less emphasis on reality in films. For this he claims three definite points of evidence none of which, in my opinion, are fully substantiated.

His first point, in short, is that "if . . . cinema is going to devote itself to contemporary sociological problems, the public will soon sicken of cinema". He says that it follows: but does it follow? Films, both British and American, which deal realistically with "all the petty domestic and economic troubles which savour of 'mass-observation'" have proved popular box-office draws. *Millions Like Us*, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, *This Happy Breed* and *From This Day Forward*, to quote only four. Of course, the stars, direction and fictional content of these films were also largely responsible for their success, but nevertheless the background and subject matter were "prosaic" and apparently did not sicken the public. Rather, I believe, they enjoy seeing the life which they know so well depicted on the screen. It insinuates that reality, their reality, can perhaps have something romantic about it after all; or more likely, they will enjoy laughing at the

inaccuracies which their personal experience will enable them to detect, and even feel a warm pride in being able to do so.

If we have to live in a world "of gasometers, pylons and bullet-ridden corpses" it is surely better that we should be helped to see them in a different yet still real light by their emotional impact on us in the form of art, than to bury our heads in the sand and dream of Parnassus. The former is at least some practical consolation for we may learn to see an austere beauty suffusing even the grimmest of realities.

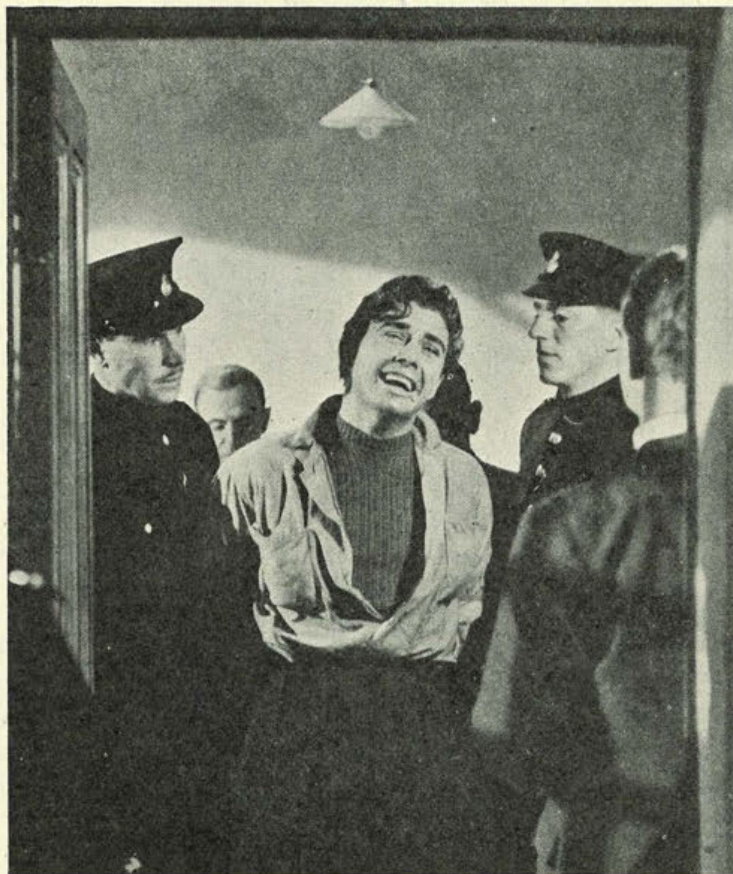
Mr. Edwards's second point was "the enthusiastic reception of such "unreal" films as *Outward Bound*, *The Blue Light*, *The Green Pastures*, *Lost Horizon*, *Henry the Fifth* and the full-length coloured cartoons of Disney". But how much was it the "unreality" of these films which contributed to their success? I have not seen *The Blue Light*, but in the case of *Outward Bound* there is a sure-fire theatrical situation which happens to be based on a fantasy of the after-world; *The Green Pastures* has a naive charm which happens to be based on the negro's "unreal" idea of heaven; *Lost Horizon* has Ronald Colman and James Hilton before it ever reaches Shangri-La; as for *Henry the Fifth*, its occasional stylized backcloth and set only served, in my opinion, to highlight the reality of the characters. After the magnificent realism of the Agincourt sequence these sets gave me an uncomfortable sense of being cheated. The cinema screen is not like the theatre stage where inadequate scenic portrayal has been a long accepted convention. Lastly, Disney's cartoons are, ipso facto, unreal: yet even here it may be seen that a delicious humanity and observation of reality are their main assets.

PRE-RAPHAELITE CUL-DE-SAC

The third point is perhaps the most pertinent. "The obsession of film with reality today . . . is creating an impasse in the further development of cinema, for celluloid commentary on contemporary social problems is not going to advance either the cause or technique of film one iota". This, however, is most obscure. If I may be permitted the Joadian phrase, it depends what you mean by "reality". Also the "celluloid commentary on contemporary social problems" sounds more like a definition of documentary rather than the fictional film which I assume Mr. Edwards was dealing with throughout his article. There can be no doubt that documentary has advanced, and will go on advancing, the cause of film.

What is this "impasse in the further development of cinema" created by reality on the screen? Surely Mr. Edwards does not think that we have reached a kind of pre-Raphaelite cul-de-sac in films? The essence of the film medium, like the art of magic, is based on the fallacy that the camera—or the eye—cannot lie. Unreality on the screen, rather like the painters' "collage", is almost an illegitimate use of the medium which stands on its own. It is neither one thing nor the other, and there is no guarantee of understanding. A "dream state" can only have meaning for one person—the dreamer, unless that dreamer is a character in the film whom the audience is acquainted with, when the "dream state" stands a reasonable chance of being understood (as in Mr. Edwards example from *I Know Where I'm Going*). But if the dreamer is to be the script-writer and the director whose mental processes we may know nothing about—heaven help us!

Mr. Edwards is very right in saying that "the cinema remains essentially a visual medium; it is pictorial", but



Daybreak.

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when he adds that "it need not be *only* pictorial" but must take on "the function of interpreting", what does he mean? Vision is a function of interpretation. That is what the work of creative film art does: by means of pictures and sounds it interprets reality. And there are infinite different ways of interpreting a reality by visual and aural means. That is where the artist in the script-writer, director and camera man must come in. Mr. Edwards complains that the novelists have more power to express "subtle nuances of thought" and to portray "certain mental dream-like states" than the film. Have they? I would rather say the opposite. He would like films made of the works of Joyce, Aldous Huxley or Mrs. Woolf. What a tremendous waste of energy this would be! Great art, by nature of its greatness, is unique to its own medium. Transposition requires complete re-creation. It is the great artist of films that we require. Did *Citizen Kane* or the modest British *Painted Boats*, uniquely celluloid creations, have no "subtle nuances of thought" nor any portrayal of "dream-like states"? Yet there was no literally "unreal" shot in these films. Of course *Citizen Kane* used "unreal" sets, but granting that the set is credible for existence there should be no difference in the ultimate showing of the scene than if the camera had gone on location for the real thing. The sets in *Henry the Fifth*, for instance, deliberately had no credible existence. It is when a difference is apparent and a set appears "unreal" that my enjoyment is reduced and I wish that more money could have been spent on having the real thing.

With apologies, I would say that we are such stuff as films are made of and however much our little lives may be rounded in a sleep, most of us would prefer to be awake to receive our money's worth!

LAUNDER AND GILLIAT

An analysis by CATHERINE DE LA ROCHE

IN THEIR TWO latest pictures, Sidney Gilliat and Frank Launder returned to the type of comedy-thriller they first excelled in. *I See a Dark Stranger* and *Green for Danger* are in the tradition of Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes*, which first drew attention to them as screenwriters. Now as writer-producer-directors with some fine war films to their credit, they decided that a spell of light entertainment would be a timely change—for their public and also for themselves. For they are not the sort who withdraw into aesthetic ivory towers or synthetic never-never lands, thence to bemuse or delude a distant public. Their own varied interests keep them in contact with current trend and happenings, and they share the fun in a lighthearted film no less than the deeper ideas in a serious one with the audiences for whom they make them. Perhaps this is why their films are popular without being patronizing and adult without being obscure.

Though they were not at the top of their form in *I See a Dark Stranger*, in one respect this film is a good example of their style. Launder, who wrote and directed it, took the vexed question of Anglo-Irish relations as background, made an English-hating Irish girl the heroine, and produced a good-humoured film full of the happiest kind of fun that could hurt neither English nor Irish. This sort of thing can't be done without a real understanding of the subject and human problems involved, and without a quality of wit which, however satirical, is free from bitterness or malice.

NATIONAL QUALITY

When Launder joined Shepherds Bush in 1935, he was teamed with Gilliat to write *Seven Sinners*, and they have worked in partnership ever since. In their screenplay of *The Lady Vanishes* they created Charters and Caldicot, the now famous characters satirizing the unimaginative Englishman, and played inimitably by Basil Radford and Naunton Wayne. The same characters appeared again in their scripts of *Night Train to Munich*, *Millions Like Us* and several radio plays. As often happens, they came into being accidentally, invented by Gilliat for a story twist, though I cannot imagine Gilliat or Launder for long overlooking any of the funnier specimens of humanity as targets for their wit.

Their scenario of *The Young Mr. Pitt*, which pointed to a historical parallel in the threatened invasion of Britain at the beginning of the war when the film was made, was in contrast to most of their earlier work, except for typical satirical touches such as the King's bathing scene.

By now Launder and Gilliat had developed their film sense beyond the scope of screen-writing. They had ideas about how their scripts should be directed, and their first venture was as joint directors on *Millions Like Us*. This is probably still their best picture. It had deep humanity and the delicacy in the handling of the tragic scene made them

extraordinarily poignant. Like many films of that time, it was influenced by the documentary approach. Background was not merely authentic scenery, it was integrated with the story. So was the humour which arose naturally out of situations or characters, never sandwiched in as deliberate comic relief.

After this Gilliat directed his own script of *Waterloo Road*, and Launder did the same on *2,000 Women*. Towards the end of the war they formed Individual Pictures, their own company within the Rank organisation, and Gilliat's *The Rakes Progress* was their first independent production. They make their pictures in turn, each writing and directing his own scripts, while producing them all jointly.

Like *Waterloo Road* and especially *Millions Like Us*, the film has a national quality, which brings us to what is probably Launder and Gilliat's chief contribution to our cinema. Having grown up with the British film industry which they entered during the transition from silent films to talkies, they played no small part in developing the essentially British style that appeared in our cinema during the war. Above all, they have always been aware of the variety of the British scene (none of that harping on country houses) and of the many (not the proverbial "one") British senses of humour.

Launder's first effort, a play, was produced by the Brighton Rep. while he was in his teens. Though in his view there was little in it except a lot of wisecracks, it secured him a job as scenarist at Elstree. Here he wrote the screenplays of some of the first British talkies, including *Under the Greenwood Tree*. Later he became a founder-member of the Screenwriters' Association, and has always advocated screenwriting as an independent creative medium: "Your novelist who condescends to write films will never do it well", he says, "but I could name a dozen brilliant writers in America—Dudley Nichols or Ben Hecht—and some of our own, Jim Williams or Eric Ambler, who are fine screenwriters because, first and foremost, they are keen on films".

Gilliat started film work at nineteen, writing sub-titles for silent films, some of which still haunt his memory. One of the worst, not his own, was in *Red Pearls*. It ran like this: "Pearls worth a king's ransom passed casually from hand to hand". He costumed a number of films and, when sound came in, worked on dubbing. Then for a time he was gag-man to Walter Forde, soon becoming a fully-fledged script writer. His *Rome Express* inaugurated Michael Balcon's programme at Shepherds Bush studios, and among his early scripts was a series of comedies for Jack Hulbert. Like Launder, he first established himself as a humorous writer, and when they both turned to serious stories, these were enlivened and enriched by their natural flair for comedy.

Their collaboration is so close and the affinities between them so great, that their films have the same highly individual style. Possibly Gilliat's humour is the more caustic and his sense of realism more uncompromising, but I'm not sure. They themselves aren't always sure which of the two is responsible for a given idea. The originality of the work, so far at any rate, lies more in their approach to a subject and in the light satirical humour they manage to conjure forth from the gloomiest background (the labour office in *Millions Like Us*, for instance), than in cinematic technique.

Waterloo Road gave unique glimpses of life in London South of the Thames, vital, sordid, tough and kindly. Its story was told with economy and pace through vivid sketches of ordinary but not insipid characters. These were not played up either as heroes or villains, though, as in real life, one's reactions to them were pretty soon established. Because the story was fearlessly realistic, arising out of a definite background during a particular phase of the war, a mood, an atmosphere, now almost forgotten, was captured as something vital. And because, for once, a soldier who is a decent, honest chap is shown breaking discipline, as soldiers have sometimes done in every land and age, the wisdom of the film has been questioned.

As for *The Rakes Progress* practically everybody disagreed with something in it, and for the most different reasons. Was it because this film also captured a fragment of life as it really is, without pointed moral, or preconceived conclusions, but with implications that any who so wished could discern? A good-for-nothing, a cad is shown as also being a charmer and a man capable of reckless courage. Is this untrue to life, and is it insignificant, especially as, unfolded on the background of real events, the story shows how circumstances could degenerate a weak-willed man who was otherwise not bad? The film recreated the confused, indefinite years between the wars in the sophisticated idiom of the time and at times with dramatic power. It wasn't a social indictment, but it was social satire.

BEHIND THE LAUGHTER

In films satire is primarily dependent on realism. Also "you have to keep every point distinct", says Gilliat, "and make your characters completely natural. If the board meeting on the coffee plantation in *The Rakes Progress* was a successful scene, this was because David Horne as the managing director was credible. People with the unconscious conviction that theirs is the only point of view behave just like that. But if he had burlesqued his part, the whole scene would have been spoilt".

Behind the laughter and the wit in Launder and Gilliat's pictures there is always something thought-provoking. They never lose sight of the wider implications inherent in every story, nor do they evade social comment or self-criticism where these are relevant. As a result the drama and tragedy in the best of their films is singularly convincing: we know that nothing has been withheld, overlooked or sentimentalized. Lily Palmer's despair when she discovers the worthlessness of the disillusioned man she loves in *The Rakes Progress*; John Mills as the soldier distracted by the double menace to his wife and marriage



Great Expectations

Cine Guild

of the London blitz and the "pin-table king" in *Waterloo Road*—these scenes had truth, and because they were related to real events that have affected all our lives, it was truth that mattered.

For the future, when serious entertainment is more timely, Launder plans to make a film about Karl Marx, and Gilliat is thinking of one on the Industrial Revolution. Set in a North country town, it will probably have several stories running through it, one connecting the others in a microcosm of civilisations, symbolizing UNO. Meanwhile Launder is filming "Captain Boycott" by Philip Rooney, and Gilliat's next will be based on Norman Collins's best-seller, "London Belongs to Me." This is a tremendous story, now tragic, now wildly comic, about London and the true Londoner, and it will give the Launder and Gilliat team scope for all their dynamic realism and their wit.

THE QUARTER'S FILMS

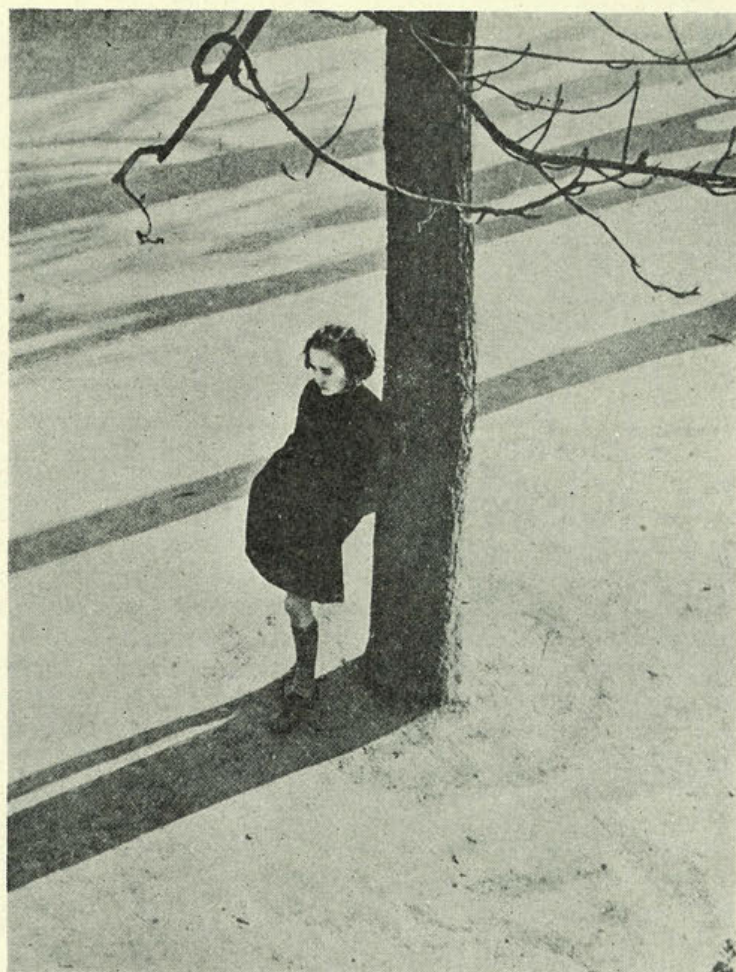
By ROGER MANVELL

I. THE CONTINENTALS

AFTER TOO LONG a delay *Les Visiteurs du Soir*, Marcel Carné's film made during the Occupation of France, has been shown in London. It has already been reviewed in this Journal.* It is a film which gives great pleasure but little final satisfaction. Its beauty is of the past, magical and artificial. It is a legend which fails to touch the reality of the mediæval; its beauty is as contrived as a tapestry. These reservations made, it is an outstanding film, with the soft, grey luminous photography of the castle and of the barren rocky landscape in which it is set, with its dreamy doleful love-song of the Devil's minstrels, its under-theme of horror symbolized by the dwarfs who haunt them ("Tourjours les Monstres"), the husky, cold seduction of Arletty's voice, the sweet intelligence of the musical score, and Jules Berry's magnificently insistent "Je Suis le Diable". Yet the film contains curious errors of taste, the Devil's television show of the jousting seen in the fountain, and the melodrama of the beating hearts at the end.

A DREAM OF REVOLT

The Academy Cinema has had the courage to revive the late Jean Vigo's psychological study of life in a boys' boarding school, playing it with great insight along with the Crown Film Unit's brilliant documentary feature on juvenile delinquency, *Children On Trial*. The two films, French and English, dovetail at many points, in spite of the realism of the latter and the surrealism of the former. *Zéro de Conduite* was made in 1933: it is a short episodic film of the revolt in the minds of a schoolboy group against all that they hate in the oppression of their school. As the film develops the characters and the treatment leave actuality further behind and it becomes a dream of revolt. The new master is seen as an acrobat, amusing and indulging the boys and openly inspiring indiscipline and revolt. The older masters are either oppressive or prying: one wears a large black hat and minces round the buildings, purloining and sneaking. Another is gross and vulgar. The Principal is a dwarf with a black beard and a bowler hat: he is a dwarf because the boys despise him, he wears a beard because the boys fear him. He keeps his bowler in a glass case, the symbol of authority. Every aspect of school life is eventually included: the indirect and symbolic



Zéro de Conduite

methods of surrealism absolve the artist from conventional reticence. Many sequences have their own nightmare beauty: a pillow fight in a dormitory culminates in a mock religious procession filmed in slow-motion among lightly falling feathers. It symbolizes the boys' ecstasy of gratitude for their moment of liberty. Some sequences are wholly Freudian, such as the blind-fold game played by a boy and a girl at a weekend party. The film ends with the triumph of the boys' dream-revolt on a day when all the dignitaries of the neighbourhood attend an assembly of the school in the dirty little asphalt playground. The rebellious boys tear tiles off the roof and rain down chamber-pots on the terrified officials. *Zéro de Conduite* is a unique contribution to the French avant-garde school of filmmaking.

It is tragic that Jean Vigo, who died after directing *L'Atalante* in 1934, should not have survived to develop his early promise.

Frenzy (the Swedish film *Hets*, directed by Alf Sjöberg) also deals with the sordid aspect of school life, though it allows a happy ending. Its theme is the suffering caused in an adolescent boy's life by the oppression of a cruel schoolmaster nicknamed Caligula, and the agony of preparation for a school-leaving examination when the boy has a disordered private life and ineffectual parents. The virtue of *Frenzy* is apparent from its earliest sequences in the school (the late boy dodging up stairs and round corridors, the Latin lesson conducted by Caligula with a suave irony which builds up to a frenzied attack). Its

* SIGHT AND SOUND, Spring, 1946.

narrative and atmospheric powers are created out of the full resources of the cinema, not out of the acting and dialogue resources alone. The type of discipline exercised by the school is emphasized by the photography, the large overhead shots of sloping staircases, the darting movements of the small boy among the masses of the architecture. The character of Caligula is suddenly illuminated by a quick cut on a sharp line of dialogue to a tilted mid-close-up. The visual intelligence of the film-team is everywhere alert to use the symbolic value of objects and architecture, not for pretentious or spurious effect, but to tighten the perception and understanding of the spectator. A face sweats, and behind it rain streams down the window. Caligula confesses some of his agony to a colleague: the camera shows us the back of his head. Few films have underlined so vividly the fear of people: the dark staircases, the shadows, the opening doors, the usual tricks of melodrama, here become slow movements of terror, a symphony of shapes which hide what is evil and threatening. The film is not concerned to please or thrill: it uses the cinema to probe the nature of the theme in hand. The implications of the story and situation cannot fail to be unpleasant to most people, but those who have suffered in schools either as pupils or teachers will recognise that *Frenzy* represents truth through the study of an extreme case.

IVAN THE TERRIBLE

Ivan the Terrible has had a mixed reception.* It is a film which challenges criticism. It possesses many sequences which no perceptive person can see unmoved by the greatness of the conception and of the treatment. It contains a performance of magnificent stature by N. K. Cherkassov. It has an unobtrusive but fine musical score composed by Prokofiev. It has the classic camerawork of Eduard Tissé, Eisenstein's cameraman since the days of *Potemkin*, and of Andrei Moskvin who directed the photography of the interiors. It was made during the war in the Alma Ata Studios in Kazakstan behind the Ural Mountains.

Yet it is a film of elaborate simplicity. Eisenstein is not interested in the complex psychology to be found in the Maxim Gorki films, or in the main tradition of the greater works of the cinema. He is not concerned to look for the poetry which lies behind the observation of everyday life, the poetry behind realism. His work is on the epic scale, and the epic has aspects of presentation which are much simpler than the complexes of psychology. Ivan is not a character: he is a symbol of the heroic man who seeks to be master of a united Russia based on the will of the common people. His enemies are not characters; they are symbols of evil, disunion and disloyalty. Hence the conception of acting in this film is that of Greek tragedy, large symbolic movements of the head, the mask-like presentation of single moods, of cunning, of treachery, of superhuman strength and heroism. The epic is no longer a fashionable form of expression in the arts, but those who would wish to understand the significance of the work of Eisenstein since *Alexander Nevsky* must be prepared to accept his art on this non-realistic, epic scale.

Eisenstein spends his elaboration upon the symbolism of his work, the scale and grandeur of the movement of

individuals against a background of vast palaces or great natural spaces. He uses the richness of robes and banquets, of great images of religious art and ritual, the Byzantine splendour which Ivan inherits but which he controls for the glory of the people he represents. His power and his glory is theirs. In return their numbers make his power real. The great twisting processions over the plains with their banners and ikons, the patterned lines of moving men in the armies set against Kazan are the symbols of that power, the more evident because they are symbols and because they are patterned against the rocks and landscapes.

One need not agree with the basis of Eisenstein's presentation of history to acknowledge the greatness of the conception which appears on the screen. The moments of stasis between the peaks of heroic action are the natural outcome of the episodic nature of the epic. They are familiar in Homer and Virgil. They are familiar in the classical composition of the Greek tragedy. Eisenstein in *Ivan the Terrible* uses the medium of the cinema to create the simple and the grand patterns of such epic poetry on the screen. It is not to be expected that there will be a large general public for such experiments. But those who wish to see the limits of cinematic expressions expanded by the artist will be glad that Eisenstein has been given the great resources of studio space and personnel to carry out his unique work.

II. AMERICANA

THERE ARE PLENTY of people who talk of Hollywood in italics and pay little enough attention to the literature of the railway bookstall and the street corner vendor. Here they would find just as many dreams stuffed with ersatz romance. The cinema with all its faults is undoubtedly preferable to such secret, hole-and-corner reading matter. The cinema is open to the broad light of public inspection. Its sins are for the most part easy public sins like the maidservant's madness in *Dragonwyck*, where a wonderful rich man (Vincent Price) in a sweeping period dressing-gown with a large and silly crest on its breast-pocket lures a simple cousin (Gene Tierney) from her virtuous country home. He kills his wife, who has some sort of disease which makes her eat too much, by putting a poisoned plant at the foot of her bed. He marries the simple girl who thinks him adorable, and then tries to kill her with another plant. He is foiled by a young and honest doctor with a useful knowledge of plants and poisons, and meets an unseemly end amid drugs and gunshots. All this action takes place in a vast black Gothic palace which might have been designed by Monk Lewis two centuries ago. The name of the home is *Dragonwyck*, which seems suitable enough. I would not complain if this were just another simple film. But it is put over with such expensive pretentiousness and high endeavour that it is sure to turn a million heads with dreams of rich men in dressing-gowns. It is best to go along and see the play "Pick-Up Girl" afterwards, or its British film equivalent *Children on Trial*.

One moves up a degree or two with Lubitsch's *Cluny Brown*, though this too is arrant nonsense with Charles Boyer as a famous Czech professor refugeeing with the maidservants in rich English country-houses just before the

* Two exceptionally perceptive reviews were contributed by Ivor Montagu to *Our Time* (July, 1945) and by Dilys Powell to *The Sunday Times* (September 1st, 1946).

War ("Who is this fellow, Hitler? Wrote some sort of book about camping, what"? etc., etc.). He is revered and patronised by silly young men with open-mouthed political leanings: we gather this is satire against distinguished academic refugees and the English upper class. Small wonder Boyer runs away on borrowed money with a parlour-maid modelled on Bernard Shaw's Liza. When the War breaks out they go to America and he makes big dough at once writing melodramatic fiction, which is what a sensible guy should do when his country is invaded and his refuge threatened. Among all the more-or-less harmless time-killers produced by Hollywood, it is an embittering thought that a director as eminent as Lubitsch should lend his name and his time to such shady satire. It may score a point here and there about English snobbery and pre-war vacuity, but the professor who sells out with honour (apparently) is an untimely misrepresentation of the academic tragedy of central Europe caused by Hitler's jackboots and rubber truncheons. That it was all intended in pure fun in sunny California is no excuse when this film will be seen over the world by a hundred million people who have little enough chance to judge the other and truer side of the picture because it is not good box-office.

Make Mine Music is a further step down for Disney into the whirlpool of technical pretentiousness which is gradually absorbing his imagination. Someone has described it as the poor man's *Fantasia*: if so the poor man is a superficial enough audience, and surely the same might be said to be characteristic of those who pay eleven shillings a time at the box-offices of Central London. Disney was once the master who gave America a hunting song against the Big Bad Wolf in the days of the depression, who had the courage to make a brilliant and beautiful series of feature-length fantasies and fairy-stories full of humanity and humour. But recently the pyrotechnics seem to have been ousting Disney from his place, and sentimentality seems to have replaced a deeper humanity. Are the Technical Boys taking over too much?

The Searching Wind, made by William Dieterle from a play by Lillian Hellman, is a curious mixture of honesty and domestic melodrama. The theme is important, the diplomatic appeasement of Mussolini and Hitler during the between-war period. There is nothing in this theme of guilt which Britain cannot share with America, the conflict in the typical ambassador's mind as he watches events worsen but does no more than be polite to everybody and send home, with some weak misgivings, his optimistically coloured reports until it is too late to be optimistic any more. Where the film seems to err is in the over-dramatisation of its theme. The ambassador's son, lamed in the War and facing amputation of his leg, seems to be suffering more from "thought" than from his wound. Why, one asks, with his education and social background, must constructive social thought be represented by sitting apart in a state of irritated brooding, restlessly driving about alone in a luxurious

chauffeured car, tossing in the night with the family and servants rushing in to help? Why must all this mental agony end with a few democratic platitudes and shoulder-pressings? The weakness of Ambassador Hayes himself is symbolised in his private life ("How little difference between life and politics") as his affections for Cathy, the progressive journalist, fail to bring him to the sticking-point of divorce from his wife, who spends her time on social visits to highly-placed Fascists. It is surely a case of over-dramatisation when Hayes, stumbling round the room trying to get the right words to report the Munich crisis to Washington, ends up in hysterics and cries "How many drinks does it take to get drunk"? It is this type of melodrama which mars what could and should have been the documentary importance of the theme of this film, for it is timely to remember now, in the bad morass of contemporary diplomatic conduct, the tragic misconception which placed mere social etiquette higher in the ambassador's list of duties than the accurate reporting of unpleasant political truths.

ORSON WELLES

The Stranger, to which the critics looked forward because Orson Welles once directed two remarkable films, is no successor to those earlier achievements, though it contains many technical points of presentation which remind one of them. *The Stranger* is good, but not excellent, thriller entertainment, in the same class as *Journey into Fear*. Welles himself plays magnificently a German war-criminal who has escaped incognito to an American small town where he has become a college teacher. A minor war-criminal is loosed to act as a decoy by Edward G. Robinson, who plays an investigator concerned to find the whereabouts of the major offender. The earlier scenes are beautifully done: the small-town setting is alive and vivid, and the character of the shop-keeper who works a "self-serve" store is himself the best piece of cinema in the film. *The Stranger* is full of fine touches of melodrama, for example the attempted murder in the deserted gymnasium, or the strained walk through the woods ending in the murder of the decoy, but in the end we come back to the many, almost choric, scenes in the shop which fix the film's terrors into a frame of reality that sharply sets them off. This is the technical trick of Hitchcock which used to work so well during his period of British melodramas. For all his extravagance, Hitchcock knew where to stop straining our credulity. *The Stranger* soon outpaced mine. Considering the lone detective possesses every proof of the Nazi's identity and guilt, it seems incredible he should be left at large to be a danger to innocent people and to come to so destructive an end on the melodramatically-designed Gothic bell-tower which fascinates him at odd hours of the night, and end by impaling his terror-stricken body on one of its mediæval mechanical figures.

EXPLORING THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE CINEMA

By Dr. H. H. WOLLENBERG

THE CINEMA, as a technical phenomenon, is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this year. As a psychological phenomenon, strange as it may seem, the cinema is far, far older. It is as old as mankind.

Exploring cine-psychology, one has to differentiate between two aspects which are distinct, though inter-related. The one aspect are the psychological factors which have created and are immanent to the cinema; the other the psychological effect of the film on the spectators.

The psychological urge inherent in the human mind to create movement—moving images—is definitely as old as mankind. While the phenomena of space are constant and the phenomena of time homogeneous in human experience, the techniques have changed through the centuries, commencing with the primitive animal frescoes in the cave at Altamira and the rock paintings in Southern Spain and Sweden. Dr. Joseph Gregor, in his work "Das Zeitalter des Films" ("The Age of the Film") (Reinhold Verlag, Wien-Leipzig, 1932), has presented a most illuminating flashback on this psychological process. I am glad to learn that this brilliant man is still—or again—in charge of the Archiv für Filmkunde, which he founded in connection with the National Library, Vienna.

PLATO ON CINEMA

According to this theory, which we may call the psychological theory, the cinema is even older than five thousand years, the age allotted to it in a recent contribution to the film supplement of the National-Zeitung, Basle, Switzerland (No. 317). There it was pointed out that if cinema means the recording of moving pictures, the first cinema performances took place in China fifty centuries ago in the form of living silhouettes. Dancers moved in front of an oil lamp and their figures were projected by means of a reflector upon a white screen erected between them and the audience. About the same time, ancient Egypt, too, saw the first "cinema". The images here were produced by means of polished steel mirrors which transmitted movements made in sunshine on to a white screen fitted up in a darkened room.

I do not know whether Plato referred to these early experiments or whether it was the prophetic vision of a great mind which made him describe the cinema, as we know it, with a baffling accuracy. In the seventh book of his "Republic", he describes the first cinema to his friend Glaukon: in a long and narrow cave people are sitting so tightly that they can hardly move. They are all looking straight ahead on to a light wall. Behind them, in the cave, a strong fire is burning. Between the fire and the audience is a narrow gangway along which actors, carrying various objects, are moving. The fire throws the shadows of the actors and objects on to the light wall opposite, where they

are seen by the spectators. Obviously, the fire represents the projector, the light wall the screen and the moving actors the running film.

Guided by Dr. Gregor, it is fascinating to watch through the centuries the efforts of human inventiveness to materialise Plato's vision. Ever new instruments have been created in the incessant struggle to satisfy the desire of the human mind to reproduce movement, with the aim of mastering the combined rhythm of space and time, as a novel means of artistic expression. The latest phase is entered with the invention of the cinematograph, and Gregor ends with an interesting analysis of the optical and aural effects of the rhythmical elements of the present-day film.

THREE-FOLD FUNCTION

When we set about to consider the psychological factors constituting the contemporary phenomenon Cinema, this writer suggests to refer to the philosopher Spranger. His doctrine shows six principal ways of looking at reality: the *theoretic* view, which relates everything to truth, to the intellectual and rational aspect; the *economic* view, which relates everything to utilitarian and commercial values; the *aesthetic* view, which relates everything, even truth, to beauty; the *political* view, the essence of which consists in influencing others and mankind; the *social* view, with the emphasis on family and social values; and the *religious* view, where the essential value lies in the sacred and the divine. These different views, of course, overlap in reality, and there are many mixed varieties. However, they are clearly represented in the cinema, although in varying degrees, with an evident preponderance of the social, aesthetic, economic and political values.

This analysis, anyway, assists in determining what Jean Stoetzel (Fondation Française pour l'Etude des Problèmes Humaines) calls the *three-fold function of the cinema*; it should present all the values to satisfy the psychological requirements of the very different elements in the public. The cinema should present each value in its most noble and perfect aspect for the individual as well as the group to which he belongs. The cinema should reveal new values to the public. Certain individuals could never form conceptions of life originating from other sources of interest but the cinema. It is only in the cinema where they are made to sympathise with characters whose lives are not directed in the same vein as their own.

Once we accept these fundamental principles, we will find it necessary to examine the psychology of film-making. At the same moment we find ourselves in front of a vast field, hardly touched by methodical methods of investigation. This writer would only select one point, which to him appears of the utmost importance for future constructive analysis.

As we know, the film, as distinct from any other art, is the product of a multitude of co-ordinated efforts. Such completely different factors as, say, business organisation and chemistry, sound technique and architecture, lighting and dress designing, music and camerawork, have to combine with the arts of acting, directing, writing. Where is the psychological centre of gravitation?

A comparison with another, older art may assist the psychologist in finding out where the real creative element lies—or should lie. I am thinking of music. The orchestra, obviously, represents the production unit composed of all the artists, technicians, craftsmen, each of them playing his particular instrument. The film's director would obviously correspond to the conductor, co-ordinating the individual members of the orchestra into one body, amalgamating their individual contributions into a single artistic purpose and style. The essence, however, is the score, the creation of the composer. Correspondingly, the scenario should be the essential foundation of film-making and the scenarist the most important personality in film production.

If so, it comes as a most perturbing experience to the investigator to find that, according to film publicity, advertising and credit titles, the share of the actors ('stars'), producer and director appears as by far outweighing the importance of the scenarist. In point of fact, film plays these days present, as a rule, so-called screen adaptations of works of literature (stage-plays, novels, operettas, etc.) with an occasional classic thrown in. The matter of adapting is merely a technical process carried out by highly skilled *routiniers* employed in the scenario departments of the studios. You will know that vast sums of money are spent in acquiring the film rights (Hollywood calls them 'properties'), especially of best-sellers, for screen adaptation.

But where are the real "*composers*", the potential Beethovens, Schuberts, Elgars and Johann Strauss of the cinema? (The fortunate case that the "composer" and the "conductor" of a film are one person—e.g. Chaplin—is and cannot be but a rare exception.) From the point of view of this investigation, the finding, selection and development of original cinema writers, the creative poets of the film, appears a prerequisite of the evolution of the cinema if its full psychological potentialities are to be achieved. If the scientist were allowed to do so, he would advise the film industrialist to spend a fraction of the amounts invested in so-called properties, for the methodical development of original screen writing talent. The encouraging venture of a scenario-writing training course just inaugurated by Independent Producers Ltd. at Pinewood Studios, sets an example which should be generally adopted.

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The other, by no means less significant psychological aspect waiting for thorough scientific investigation, is the reflection, the influence of the cinema upon the human mind. In this respect, too, Plato has foreshadowed the cinema audience in his "Republic". He describes it as a public fond of deception. They take shadow and echo, both substitutes, before reality. They find their way about more easily in the simple black and white of the silhouettes, than in the bewildering variety of real life. They like to

escape into that cave and to relax from the drabness and roughness of everyday life. They prefer watching things presented at second-hand to reality. Altogether, this is an amazing prediction of audience mentality.

THE NAIVE MIND

It is an astonishing fact, specific to the cinema, that most distinct from any other form of art or reproduction, it conveys an illusion of reality to the spectator. The naive mind in the audience will always succumb to the illusion that here is reality caught by the camera. This illusion may dissolve as soon as the lights go on again. But it exists as long as he watches the screen. The reaction of children is the best proof. It would make fascinating study for the psychologist to find out to what degree even the non-naive spectator in his subconscious mind confuses illusion with reality. The interest which the study of the cinema could present for a theory of perception has been underlined by A. J. Ayer, Wadham College, Oxford. ("La Technique Cinematographique" No. 9, Paris, 1945.) He explains that the illusion of reality is far more easily created on the screen than on the stage by the fact that we construct our perceptions, owing to our experience, on our previous perceptions. In the cinema, in spite of the two-dimensional screen, we believe to see three-dimensional figures simply because we know that human beings are three-dimensional. On the other hand, while actors on the stage are actually with us in the same building, actors on the screen are not connected with us by relations of space; thus they move in a world which we readily admit to be different from ours. An image comes to life only through its relation to a person who perceives it and interprets it according to the experience he has acquired. This experience is the experience of life, and also of the cinema. Our faculty for illusion acts only when images are presented in accordance with the standards to which we are accustomed. The gist of this investigation is that the cinema has created a specific vision of images and perhaps even of real objects.

THE POWER OF THE PRESENT

Apart from the psychological power of the cinema to create illusion, a power which has been exploited to the full by Nazi propaganda, there is another specific property which distinguishes the film from other works of art and lends it a novel kind of significance: it is capable of being seen and heard by a practically unlimited number of people. This adds another point of importance to psychological investigation. This point sprang up for the first time when, between 1900 and 1910, film theatres spread all over the globe and the film began to be the prevalent form of entertainment for the masses. The first investigation, as far as I can see, was then made in Germany by Miss Emilie Altenloh. Her book "*Zur Soziologie des Kino*", published by Eugen Diederichs, Jena 1914, is particularly valuable as it preserves the sociological and psychological factors at that early stage, when (as she mentions) 300 cinemas sprang up in Berlin during the year 1908 in addition to the 34 music halls, which so far had furnished the main popular entertainment. Induced by this observation, she made a thorough investigation into cinema audiences, paying special attention to age, social, pro-

fessional and other groupings. The gist of her splendid exposition may be found in the following sentence: "The cinema, in the first place, exists for modern people who let themselves be carried by, and unconsciously live according to the laws laid down by the present".

FUTURE RESEARCH

A further remark may be regarded as the guiding principle for any future research into the cinema and its audience. As a result of her large-scale enquiries with all kinds of filmgoers, she came to the conclusion that the cinema has become "a most powerful reality, a reality before which all questions whether its existence be to the good or the bad, or justified at all, are useless".

This truth has become even more evident in those thirty odd years since Altenloh's book was published. The cinema has made undreamt of progress as a means of mass entertainment; and its potentialities as an instrument of mass influence, which became more transparent during the war, are certainly not yet fully appreciated.

However, not only has the cinema influenced the mentality, taste and emotions of the people, but also the reverse is noticeable: changes of taste, mode and attitude of the people exercise their influence upon film production and cinema programmes. Such historical changes as the recent war and the present transitory phase, especially in Europe, after Nazi domination and Hitler's "New Order", are liable to have far-reaching psychological repercussions. Major film companies do not fail to keep their fingers on the pulse for any changes of taste that may occur. For this express purpose, for instance, a prominent expert of the Paramount Studios has recently concluded an extensive tour of Great Britain, France, Italy, occupied Germany, Switzerland, the Scandinavian and the Low Countries. As a result of his studies, he came to the conclusion that the taste of post-war audiences has undergone a notable change. "In all those countries the film which does not face up to realities will fail to satisfy", he declared. "The boy-meets-girl subject will still have its public, but it must be a *real* boy and a *real* girl in *real* situations. It is possible", he continued, "because Great Britain, having had to make pictures in war conditions, had made them in a realistic manner, that British pictures are being received so well in Continental countries".

There obviously exists a two-way inter-relationship between film making and cinema audiences; there is effect and counter-effect, influence and counter-influence, stimulating one another and forming the psychological background for future film development.

MODERN CIVILISATION

This situation is liable to raise the question of the relation between the cinema and modern civilisation generally. It is here where the sociological and the aesthetic view-points enter the field under observation. "While the sociological aspect relates to quantity, the aesthetic is that of quality. The power of the cinema equally affects the mind, representing quality, and quantity as represented by numbers. So far, it seems to be able to reconcile a homogeneous entity with universal effectiveness; for the film is

a game, a luxury entertainment, which is being played by the masses all over the world. This constitutes a perfectly novel and essential fact. It at once pervades all differences between racial or national groupings, as well as social and cultural differences within each grouping. Thus the public of the cinema form the most extended group of men conceivable, who resemble one another, who are the same man; men who carry out some identical actions of a certain type and who envisage a commonly desired aim".

This excellent definition is made by Gilbert Cohen-Seat. ("La Technique Cinematographique", No. 9, 1945).

INTERNATIONAL CO-ORDINATION

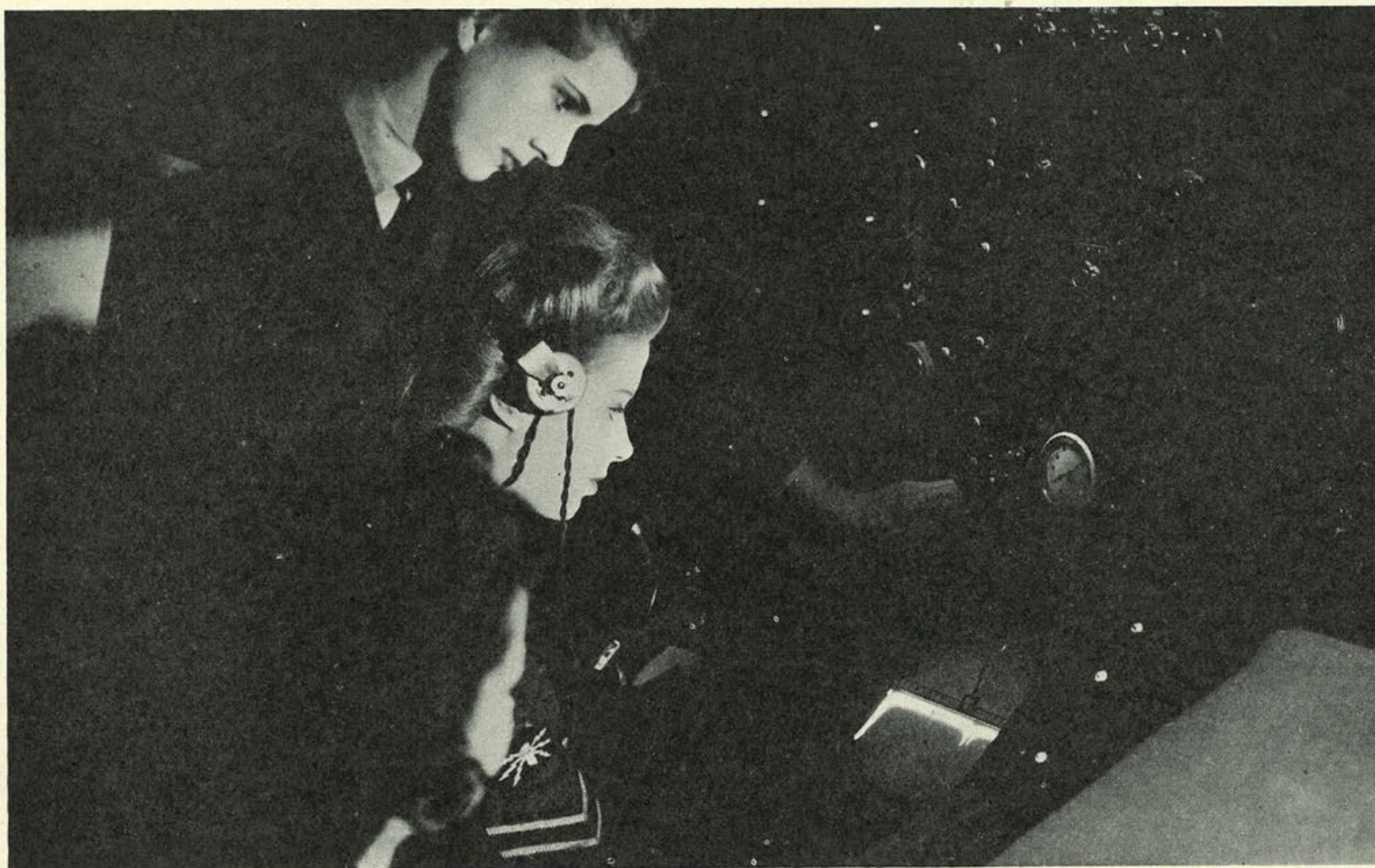
Two consequences emerge from this situation: the aesthetic and moral 'community' (of audiences) ceases to react on psychological group differentiations. The psychological differences of the single groups are absorbed by an aesthetic and moral community of audiences; they cease to function. The popularity (of the film) is measured against the greatest number of different people all over the globe. Secondly, the creator (of the film) is no longer directed by the more or less conscious desires of the public; the creation is unilateral. The ultimate problem is to know whether the cinema will only preserve a superficial unity or if the communal emotion experienced in the cinema will turn out as an important intellectual influence. Is the cinema going to be split up into national and social varieties, or will its technique and art develop in a universally homogeneous way? Will the cinema become an instrument of spiritual life?

It is Gilbert Cohen-Seat who formulates this all-important alternative, which applies perfectly to the present cardinal problems of the film. Their seriousness deserves the most careful scrutiny by responsible, scientific methods.

Progress has already been made in the scientific approach to this fascinating and all-important phenomenon Film, which in the psychological field well stands comparison with the atom bomb in the physical. Certainly, valuable spadework has and is being done in this country. In Paris and Moscow, in America, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and other countries, groups and individuals are, with great enthusiasm, setting about their task of making the science of the cinema a reality. What is lacking, however, is official encouragement, financial backing, recognition of this new science by universities and similar bodies, and, above all, international co-ordination of all these efforts. If this contribution to SIGHT AND SOUND should help in bringing this about, it will have served its purpose.

THE TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SERVICES

In the article "Postscript to India" published in the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND reference is made to the Tate Institute of Social Services. This, of course, should read "The TATA Institute of Social Services".



School for Secrets

Two Cities

FOREIGN POLICY AND CINEMA

By ARTHUR JACOBS

THE WAR BROUGHT no diminution in the popularity of the cinema in Britain. Nothing less than the severest blitz kept the picturegoer from his weekly or twice-weekly visit. Most of the feature films he saw were of the kind he had been used to before the war, but some of them, guided apparently by a desire to be realistic, had their stories set in a new world resembling the picturegoer's own, in which the revolutionary, disruptive force of Nazism was creating everywhere new problems for ordinary people. It is the purpose of this article to examine the relationship between the real Nazism and the Nazism of the screen.

Before the war, Nazism was hardly mentioned on the British screen except in newsreels. This was due partly to the deliberate policy of the British government, acting usually through the British Board of Film Censors, and partly to the attitude towards political problems of the film industry itself. It was difficult to get past the Board anything that could be construed as critical of a foreign government. The Russian film *Professor Mamlock* was banned altogether until the outbreak of the war; before the

documentary *Spanish Earth* was passed, the swastikas had to be erased from the wings of the German planes shown being shot down over Spain. The American film *Blockade*, though it avoided the use of any political terms suggesting an anti-Franco bias, and was indeed passed by the Board, was withdrawn in the middle of its provincial run after a protest by the Spanish (Nationalist) Government. This film ended with the line, "Where is the conscience of the world?"

The attitude of the British film industry was expressed by the editor of the trade paper "Kinematograph Weekly", writing in the beginning of 1939. "Censorship, especially in the matter of news films, is a question that has been raised once again. But, as I have so often noted before, it would never have been heard about unless the perpetual danger to the Trade—politics—had by some means broken into a territory where it ought to be taboo, and in its train had involved questions of principle like the freedom of the screen and totalitarian propaganda. The only efficient defence by the Trade against threatened attacks on its

liberties is one which has proved effectual for a good many years: that is, a strictly imposed self-regulation which strangles at birth any tendency towards politics. All our news-reels have to do is to adhere to this well-tryed and effective policy; any departure from it means trouble, for there are plenty eager to seize on the first opportunity. In addition, and above all, it is bad business, for it is not public entertainment". Of the American producers, Warner Bros. alone dissented from this view, and in 1939 released *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, the first of a notable series of anti-Nazi pictures culminating in *Mission to Moscow*.

WAR

The advent of war completely changed this situation. The British government recognized the importance of the cinema in maintaining public morale; the industry realized that its duty in total war must include some sort of political propaganda. By the beginning of 1940 the editor of "Kinematograph Weekly" was writing that the "abnormal circumstances" had made producers anxious to know "what kind of pictures the public is going to demand. . . . Are they to turn out propaganda and patriotic films? Or stories of frankly escapist tendency? Or classics like *Pygmalion*? . . . Of the lighter type—the cheery musical, the farce, and so on—there can be no argument: they and the straight melodrama are the backbone of our kinemas". Politics were thus now recognized as permissible, at least. The American industry similarly made up its mind, as soon as America entered the war, to work with the government; going all out for the war effort, it raised money for national savings, sent its pin-up girls to serve in Forces' canteens, and began to put Nazism on the screen. Chaplin did not wait for Pearl Harbour: he produced *The Great Dictator* in 1940. But he was an exception. Hollywood produced two anti-Soviet pictures, *Ninotchka* (1940) and *Comrade X* (1941), but did not let loose its flood of anti-Nazi films until the government gave the word. Then the producers did not merely cease to cut out anti-Nazi politics from their stories; they even, as in *To Have and Have Not*, put Nazis into a story which in book form had managed perfectly well without them.

For the presentation of Nazism on the screen, the usual method of both American and British producers was to introduce Nazism merely as a background to conventional stories—to the "straight melodrama" mentioned above, and even to the farce and the musical, by no matter how improbable and tenuous a connection. Thus Nazi espionage was dragged into an ordinary gunman plot in *A Gentle Gangster* and into an ordinary George Formby plot in *Bell-bottom George*.

BACKGROUND

A particular aspect of Nazism, the overrunning of continental Europe, was extensively used as a background, mainly in American films. There were two characteristic and sharply defined settings: the *Occupied Country* and the *Neutral Country*. Stories set in the *Occupied Country* were largely stories of escape, built round the formula: boy finds himself in occupied country—boy rescued by anti-Nazi patriotic girl—boy and girl captured—boy and girl

escape (usually through the abnormally low intelligence of the screen Nazi). A variation on this theme occurred in *Bomber's Moon*, where the boy was, as often, an American flier, but the girl for a change was a Russian army nurse, also trying to escape. Stories of the *Neutral Country* were developments of the story of intrigue and espionage, brought to such a high level between the wars by Alfred Hitchcock; indeed it is doubtful whether such films as *Journey Into Fear*, in spite of their relation to the war-time world of the picturegoer, were more exciting and better of their kind than *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, or than *The Maltese Falcon* which, though made during the war, had no connection with it. The *Neutral Country* was really any place where both Nazi and Allied agents could manœuvre reasonably freely; for this a ship would do, as in *Passage to Marseille*, or a place the political status of which relative to the war was uncertain—French North Africa was the setting for the most famous of all this class of pictures, *Casablanca*.

The idea of using the state of Europe under the Nazis as a background for films of intrigue or escape was a good one and perfectly legitimate. Too often, however, scant attention was paid to making this background realistic. It was very rare that an escape story set in an occupied country really said anything about how that occupation affected ordinary people, and how it differed, for example, from the military government of an Allied power or from the Nazi treatment of one of the other occupied countries. One of the few exceptions was *The Adventures of Tartu*, which was not a good film, but stood out for its vivid representation of the inside of a Nazi slave-labour factory. The *Neutral Country* was similarly conventionalized. There, men of many nations, some more mysterious and with heavier accents than others, divided their time between luxurious hotels, obscure attics, and aristocratic gambling-dens; their women, though frequently daring figures in the Underground movement with a Nazi price on their elaborately coiffured heads, drove prominently in beautiful dresses and large cars at night through the streets of Lisbon, Istanbul or wherever it might be. Where in fact the scene was, the viewer was reminded at intervals by the insertion into the dialogue of a few words of the appropriate language.

NEW PLOTS

These films introduced Nazism only as a background to conventional and well-tryed plots. Others, by contrast, had new plots, arising specifically out of the war against Nazism, but without any mention of the political issues involved; among these were a number of pictures, mostly British, about the home front, and such films of military action as *Went the Day Well*—an exciting and effective film about a German military raid on England, which, however, would have been equally convincing with the roles of British and Germans reversed. A third group of films took as their subject some aspect of Nazism itself.

To produce such a film it was necessary for a Nazi and an anti-Nazi to be placed in some setting where there could be genuine dramatic interplay between them. It was rare, especially as the war developed, for the anti-Nazi to be a German: *The Mortal Storm*, *Pastor Hall*, and *Freedom Radio* were all made in 1941 or earlier. Rarely, again, was the principal Nazi character in a film anything but a

German. A German Nazi had, therefore, to be set opposite a non-German anti-Nazi. One way of doing this was to lay the scene in Nazi Germany, but before the war, when the foreign anti-Nazi still had some freedom of action. *Pimpernel Smith* and *Mr. Emmanuel* were conceived in this way: in the first a young English professor, in the second an old English Jew goes to Germany to bring someone out of the hands of the Nazi. Another possible setting was the Nazi-occupied country: in *This Land is Mine*—one of the few stories set in occupied Europe which was not an escape story—Dutch school-teachers are shown resisting as best they can the Nazification of their educational system. In a very simple and very moving scene, teacher and class tear out of their textbooks pages which have been proscribed by the Nazis. This film had not a “happy” ending: not unnaturally there have not been many like it.

Particularly ingenious plots were used in one British and one American film to present the Nazi individual in a democratic environment. *Forty-ninth Parallel* followed the journey of a U-boat crew from northern Canada towards the (then neutral) United States. *To-morrow, the World* (originally a stage play) showed a Nazi-educated German child being received into the society of an American small town.

ARGUMENT

Both these films differ not only from films where Nazism is used as a background, but from most of those dealing directly with some aspect of Nazism, in that the anti-Nazi side is made to argue its case. The leader of the Germans in *Forty-ninth Parallel* is a man of integrity; between him and his democrat opponents the tussle is fair—it is honest—it is dramatic. In *To-morrow, the World*, the Nazi boy Emil, almost as soon as he has met his American host Mike, and Mike's fiancée Leona Richards, volunteers the information that in the plane he “had to sit next to a big fat Jew”.

Mike (gently): “Emil: Miss Richards is Jewish”.

Emil: “That is—regrettable”.

Mike: “It's not regrettable at all”.

—and the argument is on.

Similarly in the film *Lifeboat*, the presence of a Nazi U-boat captain among a boatload of Americans provides the opportunity for both the Nazi and the anti-Nazi case to be presented by words and action.

Usually, however, nothing like this was allowed to happen. The anti-Nazi did not have to argue. Instead of a logical case he was provided by the story with merely a sentimental appeal; instead of an argument, there is merely the exchange of melodramatic phrases. In *Mr. Emmanuel*, for instance, the feeble, courteous and upright old Jew is violently contrasted with the strong and brutal Nazis; sentimentality is allowed to prejudice the issue. The German woman, who has had a son by a previous marriage with a Jew, is told by her second husband, a Nazi official: “Choose! Jewish brat or German husband”?

This low level of dramatic treatment, which is a fair sample of the screen presentation of Nazism in all but a few exceptional cases, betrays two faults which are inexcusable if the film is to be treated as a medium not only of entertainment but of artistic and intellectual communication between people of adult minds. In the first

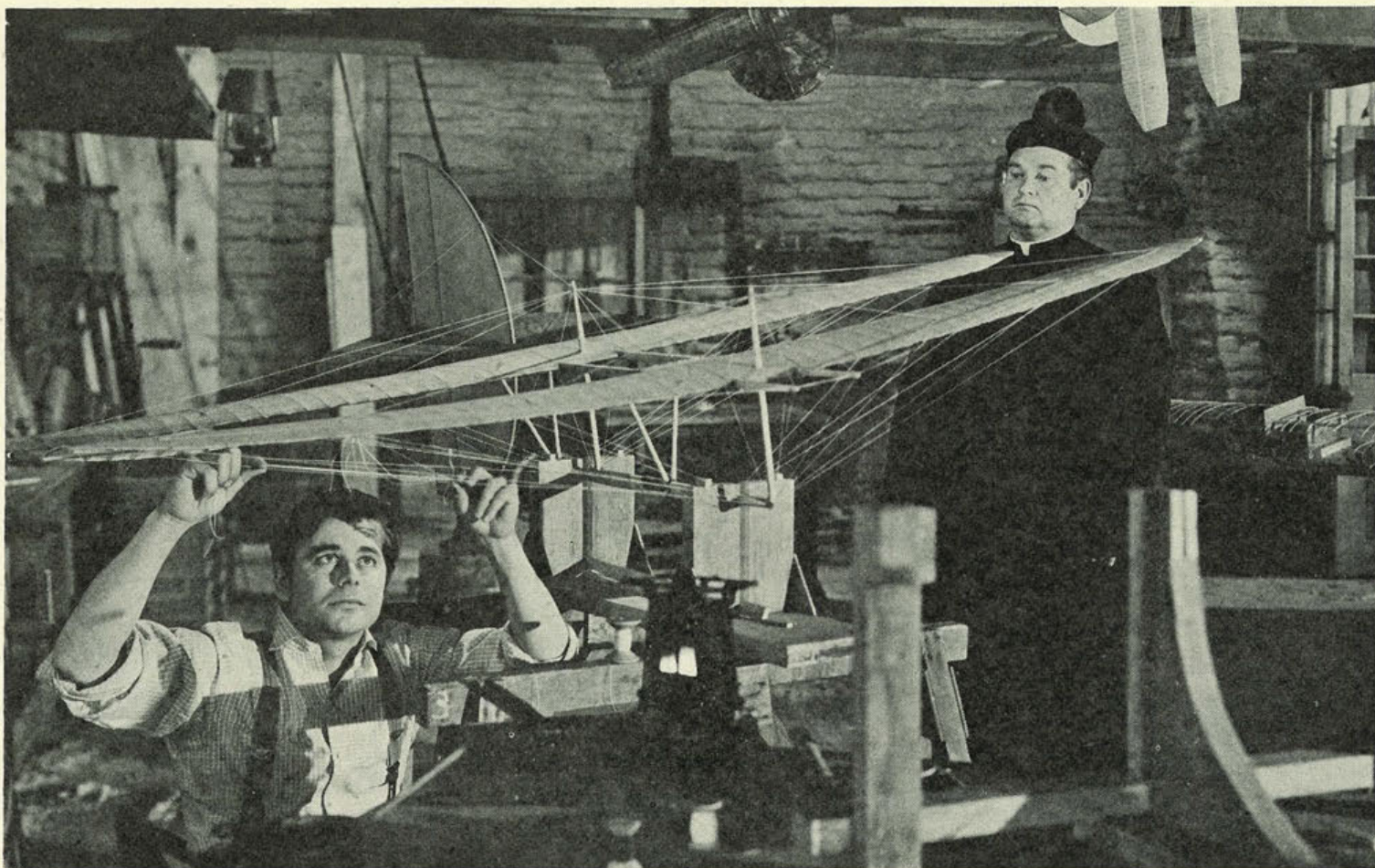
place, the real nature of Nazism is not shown. The only difference between this sort of screen Nazi and the cattle rustler of the Westerns, or the German in the films made after the last war, is that the Nazi wears a swastika. He is not part of a movement which is the greatest threat for centuries to the well-being of man; he is a film villain, strong, sadistic and stupid, who is sure to be beaten in the end. Secondly, just as the nature of Nazism is not shown, nor is the democratic alternative to Nazism. Some films, *Mrs. Miniver* and *The Demi-Paradise* among them, put forward the simply misleading idea that quaint customs and aristocratic traditions were themselves strong enough ideas to combat Nazism; most films either said nothing or took refuge in abstract political phrases. They were doing throughout the war what official propaganda had done for the first few months of the war: fighting merely “against” something. The positive values of the liberal-democratic idea were almost entirely neglected.

BRITISH FAILURE

That in the American and British film industries were men who could treat mighty themes with nobility and compassion was shown by the appearance of *Fury*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Love on the Dole*, and other films. But somehow the spirit applied in these pictures to events within the producers' own countries was not allowed, with a few exceptions, to break the bonds of national pride and to depict the international tragedies of the world under the Nazi shadow and, bigger than the battle between armies, the battle between the idea of freedom and the idea of tyranny. Nowhere is the British failure in this respect shown more clearly than in the case of the director John Baxter. To Britain's internal social problems he brought, as in *Love on the Dole* and *The Shipbuilders*, imagination and sympathy; but so far from extending this spirit to the cause of international understanding, he coupled his name, in *We'll Smile Again*, not only to one of the silliest plots ever filmed, but to the support of an anti-alien scare campaign, for the story suggested that aliens in the British film industry ought to be regarded with suspicion as enemy spies. No idea could be better calculated to distract people from the significant fact about the presence of aliens in Britain during the war—namely, that they showed the international character of the struggle against Nazism.

THE REFUGEES

That the British and American film industries did not appreciate how completely the struggle against Nazism, in reality, was something greater than the struggle of one nation against another, is shown in their failure to make a film about the world-wide movement of refugees which took place as a result of the accession to power of the Nazis. This was a most suitable subject for film treatment; it raised direct human issues in their most impassioned form—the separation of lovers, of old people, of mother and child; the hardships of travel and pursuit; the emotions of loneliness and fear and hunger and comfort—but, because it transcended not only party but nationality, race and religion, it could not be dealt with by anyone without a burning faith in the anti-Nazi cause and a clear vision of



Gallant Journey

Columbia

the issues involved. No flag-waving could help, no platform speeches. There were occasional references, it is true, to refugees in such films as *Casablanca*, *The Next of Kin*, and *The Gentle Sex*; and *Journey for Margaret* dealt movingly with the plight of one particular kind of refugee, the blitz orphan. But the task of making a film about the elemental lot of refugees everywhere was left to the Swiss producers of *The Last Chance*, a superb film making its appeal to the deepest of humane feelings, and based upon the strengths and frailties of ordinary people. Meanwhile British and American producers were still making films in which good characters are so good as to be impossible and the villain is proclaimed a villain by the badge on his sleeve.

Thus, generally, the British and American producers did not show the picturegoer the positive values of liberal democracy—nor did they show those of the political system of our Russian allies. It was easier, now anti-Soviet films were no longer fashionable, to take refuge behind the popularity of the music of Tchaikovsky, as in the fulsome tribute *Song of Russia*, or to insert an occasional “good” Russian into a conventional plot, as in *Background to Danger* or *Bomber’s Moon*. The authorities seemed to be afraid to allow Russia to expound her own philosophy to British audiences: when *Professor Mamlock* was released in 1940 many of the English subtitles were blanked over, and the picturegoer could hear the words “Marx” and “Lenin”, but was forbidden to know what was being said about these thinkers—unless he understood Russian, in which case he must have been assumed to be either incorruptible

or already corrupted! There may have been a political case for such censorship in 1940; there was no case for the continual avoidance by the industry, right through the war, of an honest and fundamental film treatment of Soviet Communism. The trouble was that most producers, lacking either the knowledge or the courage to present on the screen the values even of the liberal democratic system of their own country, were not surprisingly even more backward in presenting a rival, though still anti-Nazi, system, or in showing how friendship between Russia and the West might be based not merely on the conveniences of a war-time alliance, but on resistance to Nazi ideas wherever they spring up.

Perhaps it is still too early to condemn finally the British and American film industries’ treatment of Nazism. After all, the film of *All Quiet on the Western Front* did not appear until 1930. But hitherto, at any rate, they have thrown away urgent material. With a few notable exceptions, their films, though produced with a rising standard of technical excellence, have not dealt adequately with the challenge of our time from Nazism. The cinema as a realistic art cannot maintain its integrity if it continues to fail so; as a medium of communication of the highest social importance, it must not be allowed to fail. Neither government interference, nor financial insecurity, nor pressure of monopoly powers within the industry itself, must be allowed to deter the cinema from tackling themes of the highest social interest and at the highest moral level. That it is capable of assuming this high task, ample promise has been given.

CREED FOR CINEMA

Roger Manvell reviews "*Grierson on Documentary*" edited by H. Forsyth Hardy

I HAVE ALWAYS thought that John Grierson was at heart an expert showman. Nurtured beneath the Scottish pulpit, trained in academic philosophy, student during his mid-twenties of American press, radio and cinema, and commencing his journalistic career on such papers as the *New York Sun*, he returned to Britain in 1927 with a showman's eye for style. This style combines shrewd observation with a certain moral fervour, and often enough the eloquence seems to flash with poetry. The style certainly modifies as the writer ages, but Forsyth Hardy presents us with the work of a mature, apt and masterly critic of the feature film commencing in the early thirties, the decade in which Grierson developed from the young man "brimming with ideas" who called on Stephen Tallents in February, 1927, to turn into the wily and visionary administrator who became Canada's Government Film Commissioner after producing for the E.M.B. and G.P.O. in Britain.

Grierson has always been in the position of an expositor, arguing the case for documentary. He is as eloquent a talker as he is a writer, and it was time someone collected his articles together, for they make an impressive summary of Grierson's creed for cinema. His early, violent, Americanised style does not disguise a doctrine which has remained consistent.

As I understand it, the first job of a critic is to stand as sensory instrument to the world of creation, and register this revelation as it comes along, and point people to it and, it may even be, do something to underline and elucidate it.

I look to register what actually moves: what hits the spectator at the midriff: what yanks him up by the hair of the head or the plain boot-straps to the plane of decent seeing. I see no reason why, because a film is made for the populace and made for money, we should exempt it from the ordinary duties of art. (p. 27.)

Although he is always discussing art, he is not deluded by it. He denounces the art for art's sake fetish which emasculates the artist by making him reject the pursuit of truth in favour of the pursuit of irrelevant beauty.

I urge the point because there is one thing the cinema preciously possesses. It began in the gutter and still trails the clouds of glory with which its vulgar origin was invested. But as we ask it to go deep, be sure we are not just asking it to go middle-class. . . . Some of us say the future is where vitality is, and never mind the art of the cinema for the present. It would be a pity if we achieved everything and lost our sense of smell. (p. 72.)

And, writing later in 1942, he says:—

The history of documentary is the history of exploring new fields of material, always with difficulty first, then easier and better. Its chief temptation has been to abandon exploration and, doing better what has been done before, pursue the comfort of technical excellence. It will be remembered that this also was one of the reasons for Russia's attack on the "formal arts". (p. 184.)

In the contemporary world where a new idiom and locale for poetry is being discovered, the following is one of the most illuminating statements Grierson has made:—

It seems to me that the emotional and spiritual maintenance of democracy depends on an absolute acceptance of the idea that a man is a man for a' that, and that the most important poetry or beauty in the end is that which bubbles traditionally—and not always academically—out of ordinary people. It will mean a widening of our educational view in half a dozen classes of curriculum. It will mean that the pictures of Jimmy Cagney will jostle for attention in the presence of Shakespeare himself, and that when Cézanne is being discussed, the beauties of public-house art will not be forgotten. If any complain of the vulgarity of the project, I can only answer that the vulgarisation of education is in the logic of our time and that it will bring with it—this outlook on the actual—a deep inspiration that we need. (p. 161-162.)

Forsyth Hardy is a sympathetic editor,* and he has successfully presented Grierson as a critic and writer passing through successive, though logically related stages. First there are fifty pages of acute criticism on the feature film written over ten years ago, brilliant assessments because they take into account the underlying values of the work of artists like Chaplin, the Marx Brothers, Laurel and Hardy, von Sternberg, von Stroheim, Pabst, Lubitsch, Clair, Asquith and Hitchcock. Of Asquith's film *Dance Pretty Lady*, for example, he observes that what Asquith really needed was an important story to match his sensitiveness and talent:

I think, myself, that like many other brilliant young men of his training and generation, he is a damned sight too remote from ordinary things to discover it easily. It is not enough to recognise bigness by its classical reference (for this Asquith can do on his head); it must be recognised, without reference at all, out of one's own most private sense of importance, if there is to be power of revelation. I cannot tell you what the secret is, but it should be plain on the face of it that there are more powerful spirits to be called from the deep than you are likely to get from stories of this sort. (p. 52.)

Parts Two and Three contain much of Grierson's stated principles of documentary. Especially important are the articles "First Principles of Documentary", "Creative Use of Sound", "Summary and Survey, 1935" and "Films and the Community". Grierson's often quoted summary of documentary principles will be found on pp. 79-80. He frequently discusses technical problems, but his main concern is always with the social reference of the work in hand. He had by now his team of directors working for him, and he enjoys watching their work grow under his guidance:

They believe that beauty will come in good time to inhabit the statement which is honest and lucid and deeply felt, and which fulfils the best ends of citizenship. They are sensible enough to conceive of art as the by-product of a job of work done. The opposite effort to capture the by-product first (the

* My only quarrel with him, a small one, is that an unobtrusive indication at the end of the book of the individual sources and dates for the many quotations made would not only have been useful, but would have shown more clearly how early Grierson was in advancing ideas which have now become current thought among progressive writers on the cinema.

self-conscious pursuit of beauty, the pursuit of art for art's sake to the exclusion of jobs of work and other pedestrian beginnings), was always a reflection of selfish wealth, selfish leisure and æsthetic decadence. (p. 84.)

The articles in Part Four turn to the service of documentary in war-time. Grierson's terms of reference now widen out and the social philosopher becomes more important than the film-maker. His concern is now with the nature of propaganda, and even with the tenets of democracy itself. The meaning of the word documentary expands, and the collective career of the documentary producers is thought of in social terms:

We were reformers open and avowed: concerned—to use the old jargon—with “bringing alive the new materials of citizenship”, “crystallizing sentiments” and creating those “new loyalties from which a progressive civic might derive”. Take that away and I'd be hard put to it to say what I have been working for these past fifteen years. . . .

These facts should have made it clear that the documentary idea was not basically a film idea at all, and the film treatment it inspired only an incidental aspect of it. The medium happened to be the most convenient and most exciting available to us. (p. 179-180.)

The four essays in this section of the book show Grierson at the peak of his achievement as a writer and possibly as a social philosopher. The articles which follow in Parts Five and Six, except for “Education and the New Order”, lack the inspired clinching with a continuous train of belief and thought which give this work its fine sense of style and mental poise.

It is to education that Grierson turns increasingly in the last pages of this collection of his writings. He wants education to match the public need by taking its roots from the common culture:

I have gone through the farce of teaching *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to evening school brush-workers, and Plato to tired labourers. It was a pretty conceit: but we have, I think, all come to appreciate how detached from reality such an outlook on education is. This education is like a rose without a smell. It misses the essence of common thinking and common doing. It lacks integral contact with the living processes of citizenship. It approaches the labourer—and I can only think of it as a highly insulting approach—with the intention of improving him and of shaping him in an image which could never be his reality. He may be a fine labourer and a fine man: he will at his best be but a poor gent in a library—and who wants to be that anyway? It is an anæmic conception. It lacks what seems to me respect for the labourer as such and for the man that is in him, and for the part he can play in his own community. It does not create an image in his mind of what he, himself, on his own doorstep, and out of his own rich human character, could do and enjoy within the community. It is education with its roots in the air. (p. 158.)

The implications of this approach to education he summarises later:

Let me distinguish the principal problems of education in a democracy. Firstly, you must inspire interest in the community life. Secondly, by creating such warm sentiments in regard to one or other aspect of the community life, you will inspire that initiative which is the heart and soul of the democratic idea. Thirdly, you must help in creating common standards of community thinking and community doing, if democracy is to be not only spirited but fine. Firstly: Interest. Secondly: The participation which emanates from interest. Thirdly: Standards of judgment. (p. 162-163.)

He is concerned, finally, with taking a world view of all national and educational problems, and with creating through film (since it is an excellent medium for the purpose) an educated citizen of the world. “One of the great discoveries in the history of the film”, he says, “was the simple discovery that there is more seating capacity

outside the film theatres than there is inside them”. The non-theatrical distribution of documentary film is therefore the means of bringing the world's problems and inspirations to the meeting-place of the citizen. It was to plan films for the world citizen that Grierson resigned from his job as Canadian Film Commissioner in October, 1945. He has moved from the national sponsorship of Britain and Canada to a world sponsorship. He has formed International Film Associates in Washington for research and The World To-day, Inc., for production. He hopes to make forty films a year on world affairs for international distribution.

On the as yet narrow bookshelf of essential volumes about the cinema “Grierson on Documentary” must take its place, and our gratitude should be expressed to Forsyth Hardy for initiating and undertaking its compilation. Since the last work should be Grierson's, let it be this:

I remember coming away from the last war with the very simple notion in my head that somehow we had to make peace exciting, if we were to prevent wars. Simple notion as it is, that has been my propaganda ever since—to make peace exciting. In one form or another I have produced or initiated hundreds of films; yet I think behind every one of them has been that one idea, that the ordinary affairs of people's lives are more dramatic and more vital than all the false excitements you can muster. That has seemed to me something worth spending one's life over. (p. 154.)

A WORK OF REFERENCE

The British Film Year Book. Compiled by Peter Noble. (London, British Year Books, 1945.)

SIR ALEXANDER KORDA says in his foreword: “This is the first book to be written exclusively about the progress of British films and the people who work in the industry”. There are many American books of reference, which deal either entirely with the Motion Picture Industry in America or which incorporate only incomplete references to the work and personalities of the film industry over here. The British Film Year Book cannot, therefore, help but prove useful in so virgin a field. There are 280 pages in all, 113 of which are devoted to a who's who of personalities, 80 to some very good stills of recent British films, 9 to a list of representative British films released during the war, 3 to a bibliography of books on the British film and 3 to a list of companies and studios. This leaves a bare 60 odd pages for a Brief Historical Survey of the British Film Industry, which is not a great deal for so large a subject. However, the main points are well brought out and these, no doubt, are adequate, especially as the book is evidently intended to be popular and primarily for reference. Nevertheless, the chief faults of the work are probably its superficiality and lack of discrimination. It does not manifest any very deep knowledge of the subject and, although Mr. Noble's swans are swans, his geese are swans too, so that the merely mediocre often receive as much adulation as the really excellent. We needs must love the highest when we see it, but we are not under this obligation to anything else, even when it is new and enterprising. An index to the book would have been useful.

A new and enlarged edition of this book, it is understood, is in course of preparation.

Shaw has been acclaimed by so many eminent people for his political awareness, his literary style, his sense of theatre and the cogency of his exposition, both literary and dramatic, that we seem to have forgotten what will surely sooner or later be cited as his greatest contribution to culture in general: enlightenment through the medium of the cinema. The spoken word has been replaced by the written word, the written word by the radio and the radio is slowly being superseded by the film as a medium of dissemination, cultural, political and essentially social. Even the most violent anti-screen critic has to admit that the cinema is, *par excellence*, the most influential of all character-moulding entertainments.

In *Pygmalion*, *Major Barbara* and, more recently, *Cæsar and Cleopatra*, Shaw, with the able assistance of Gabriel Pascal, has raised the British film from a slough of despond, which even the documentary bull-dozers of the war years failed to do. Whether Shaw's plays and prefaces are to be read by posterity or not, he has created single-handed a revolution in film making. The whole story of the production of *Cæsar and Cleopatra* can be read in "Meeting at the Sphinx",* and one wonders how many of the people who sit back in their comfortable 6s. seats realize what labour, ingenuity and painstaking research went to the making of this film. Although written about 1900, the play itself is as near to modern technique in script-writing as one could wish. *Major Barbara* and *Pygmalion* required some re-writing, but *Cæsar and Cleopatra* was so near in spirit and technique that screen adaptation was comparatively simple. That Shaw has always been ahead of his time is now a truism, but that forty-five years ago a man could write plays which are so perfectly adapted to film making is almost a miracle. Shaw has always been sure of exactly what he wants, unlike many of our present-day scenarists, playwrights and script writers, and nothing has ever dissuaded him from his purpose. That is why he has always been a leader and not a follower.

Throughout the making of *Cæsar and Cleopatra* Shaw and Pascal, besides meeting frequently, have corresponded, and some of Shaw's postcards are the acme of brevity and humour. For example, on the question of whether Britanuns should carry a crook or not, Shaw wrote to Pascal "... A crook in England means either a shepherd or a bishop. Its presence or absence in the film will not affect the receipts by a single centesimo ... A crook is a hindrance to a speaker, and an asset only to a dumb figure in a pageant: z.b. a bishop".

It is this essentially Irish facility for seeing the humorous side of things which endears Shaw to so many and, combined with a lesson, humour, the sugar on the pill, is what we need. In applying his zeal and humour to the films, Shaw has done something never previously done by a dramatist.

Lord Dunsany says in "G.B.S. 90",† "I am sure that all of us see a little more clearly from having had Shaw to point things out for us", and a greater tribute than this one could not desire.

J. M. S.

* By Marjorie Deans, Macdonald, 1946, 10s. 6d.

† Edited by S. Winsten, Hutchinson, 1946, 21s.

THE ART OF THE MOTION PICTURE

A book by Jean Benoit-Levy

THE HUMANISM OF Jean Benoit-Levy, manifested in his films, *La Maternelle*, *La Mort du Cygne*, *Feu de Paille*, is crystallized in this book, published simultaneously in the United States and Canada (by Longmans Green and Company, of Toronto). It is rare enough when an outstanding director sets down his theories of film making in a book, but when a director resists the temptation to rationalize film theory in terms of his own experience and makes a plea for the development of the film as an educational and humanistic force, placing all theories and "schools of film-making" secondary to that salutary end, such a book is an event. It is an event because people, for the most part, look upon the film as a form of light entertainment. Its potentialities (and achievements) as an art and as a new and strikingly effective medium of human inter-communication is almost lost upon them if it exists in their minds at all. Dr. Benoit-Levy, therefore, discusses the film from those two angles in the two parts that divide his book: Part 1, The Motion Picture in Education; Part 2, The Motion Picture in the Art of Entertainment. (You will note that he stresses the *art* of entertainment, implying that there is an esthetic in film as in music, painting or literature. When that esthetic is adhered to, even the film of entertainment becomes an educational force, strengthening the bond of understanding between peoples. "A truly sincere film will affect people of every class, every country, and even of every period", he says. He does not underestimate audiences, but warns that the art of the film must not lose contact with the people. "More so than any other art, the motion picture derives its inspiration from the people and must yield back to the latter the fruit from the seed which it provided". Nor by art does he mean formalism. "If a film is outside their comprehension, then it corresponds to nothing human. In my opinion, a so-called good film that does not make itself felt by every type of audience is a film that has failed").

The chief value of the book, aside from its welcome reiteration of principles that need always to be insisted upon and clarified, is its non-intellectual approach to its subject, its warmth which will make it appeal to the non-professional movie-goer and relate the film in terms of the movie-goer's own experience. In the last analysis, nothing else counts, for the professional, himself, will sooner or later be judged by the mass of movie-goers of the world. *La Maternelle* and *Potemkin*, *The Big Parade* and *The Last Laugh* were not "primarily" works of film art which happened to have popular elements in them. It was their universality that made them great. Technique is a means to an end. The point is—how noble is that end?

HERMAN G. WEINBERG.

VISUAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

By W. A. WITTICH

Director of the Bureau of Visual Instruction, University of Wisconsin

THREE YEARS AGO it was my opportunity to develop a programme of selection and utilization of visual education materials with a group of elementary teachers. One of them confronted me with this statement: "Visual education. Oh yes, we have been all through that about five years ago. It doesn't seem to do much good for us. It just doesn't seem to work."

The fallacy of such a statement is easily recognized by those of us who agree that the field of visual education is an effective supplement to current educational methods. However, the teacher had a point—she had never truly experienced what can happen when correctly chosen visual materials and visual techniques are added to the complete climate of classroom experience.

When we look back over the history of audio-visual materials and teaching devices as a part of formal education, we must recognize at once that there is nothing new about this means of learning. Learning by seeing and hearing is and has been the natural way to acquaint ourselves with our environment. As long as man has attempted to organize education into a logical and formal sequence, he has depended upon visualizations and auditory sources for his ability to impart information from one generation to the next.

The history of visual education in the United States probably begins with the development of illustrated text books during the latter part of the nineteenth century. During this same period, largely under the direction of the Keystone View Company, the 3½ in. by 4 in. glass lantern slide came into its own. These glass lantern slides were the first visual education material which were correlated at all with the courses of study then pursued in the public schools of the United States.

HISTORY

At the turn of the century the 35 mm. silent film was making a way for itself in the entertainment theatre, but the public schools of America, not having the proper equipment nor the properly prepared material, were not in a position to be very greatly influenced by this development. Shortly after the close of the first World War, however, when the 35 mm. film gave way to 16 mm., many agencies exerted their energies towards planning and producing educational material in silent 16 mm. film form, since at this time several equipment companies were successful in producing 16 mm. silent projection equipment. The presence of this equipment, coupled with the growing energies placed in the production of the 16 mm. film, made it possible for the schools to examine current visual educational materials in film form. Educators' cognizance of visual teaching materials can best be cited through some of the typical researches which were accomplished as early as 1923 and 1925. It was during this period that school

people asked such questions as this: "Can teaching proceed as efficiently in such subject areas as the social sciences, nature study, general science, and physiology, when accompanied by film instructional materials, as in the traditional situations where no information is presented through the medium of the 16 mm. silent film?" As anyone who is familiar with the literature of United States of that period can attest, the answer was definitely in the affirmative.

Soon sound was added to the motion picture. During the early years of the 1930's many of the previously produced 16 mm. silent films were re-edited in sound form, and many new and effective sound films were produced. As can readily be expected, a new cycle of research was planned to investigate the influence of sound motion picture instructional material on the classroom learning situation. This second cycle of research may be briefly characterized as investigating the effect of sound instructional films in such subject areas as history, general science, music, biology, safety education, and others. The instructional value of the sound film as a supplement to existing courses of study was definitely established.

JUSTIFICATION

During the closing years of the 1930's little doubt remained that film information could add experiences to the classroom environment which heretofore had not been capable of being reproduced in the classroom environment. Teaching films were generally conceded to be a valued addition to the array of classroom information sources which every teacher sought to make available to her pupils.

It was during these same years of the late 1930's that the visual influence began to make itself felt in other areas of classroom learning materials. For example, it was during these years that textbook format and planning was brought to its zenith. No publisher of books would think of bringing forth a new edition without first investigating every possibility, insofar as accompanying that text material with good illustrations, maps, charts, and other possible graphic presentation was concerned. During these same years equipment manufacturers greatly increased plans for making and distributing filmstrip projectors, 2 in. by 2 in. and 3½ in. by 4 in. lantern slide projectors, opaque projectors, silent and sound motion picture projectors.

Up to the time of the outbreak of World War II, public education in America was being quickly confronted with an array of instructional equipment possibilities which had never been made available to us in the past. The war years presented a story of the development in armed force training that has left an indelible mark upon the public minds as well as upon the minds of the public educators in the United States. It is felt by many qualified persons that the influence exerted by the armed force training programme has given

impetus to the field of visual education that might otherwise have taken decades to accomplish.

The story of what has happened to visual education in the United States during the closing years of World War II and the account of how educators have been watching the production of visual education materials and equipment during the last two or three years is indeed an interesting phenomenon to contemplate. Let us examine briefly the little evidences of what has been taking place in public education, with respect to the selection and utilization of audio-visual tools to learning. Let us confine our examples to one typical state of the union, a mid-western state, Wisconsin.

Before the outbreak of World War II, most of the calls or requests for visual educational materials were being received from the larger high schools of that commonwealth. At this period of time, let us say, X sound film projectors were in use among the schools of Wisconsin. During the war years, largely because of the great attention that was being paid to the role of visual education equipment and materials in the armed forces training programme, the use of those visual educational materials (mostly, 16mm. sound motion-picture films) practically doubled itself in the schools of this state, even though there was no material increase in the number of projectors being used in these schools. During the year immediately following the close of World War II, enthusiastic approval for sound teaching films was greatest in such subject areas as United States history, civics, human biology, physics, chemistry, home economics, nature studies, and the broad field of the social studies. During this period requests for material reached a 3X demand when compared to the demand that existed before the outbreak of World War II. Less spectacular, but almost as extended, has been the increased demand for the allied visual education materials for use in the classroom, namely, the 2 in. by 2 in. slide and the 35 mm. filmstrip. Just recently, also, in this same state there has been received a growing number of inquiries, particularly from high school supervisors and teachers, as to whether or not good recordings in the social studies, sciences, and in other subject areas, would or would not be made available shortly to the youth of the schools throughout the state.

PRODUCTION

Now let us turn our attention to what has happened during the past five years to the production of materials suitable for use in the classroom. As recently as the close of the 1930's the number of persons or corporations engaged in the production of audio-visual materials for classroom use could easily be counted on the fingers of one's hands. Today, quite in contrast, an exhaustive search for the newly organized agencies engaged in the production of visual teaching materials would yield a count well over fifty. The number of agencies convinced that education is evidencing an economic demand for visual materials has increased tremendously.

With this increase in the agencies of production has come a tremendous increase in the numbers of physical volumes or reels of visual material available to the schools of America. With this increase has come the necessity for teachers to ask themselves whether or not it is their responsibility to evaluate the quality and usefulness of this literature of visual education material. Very fortunately, here and there throughout our country such agencies as the American Film Library Association, the National Council for the

Teachers of English, and other similar agencies of the National Education Association, and large state universities are undertaking to estimate the contribution of the reel after reel of alleged educational material in film form. Educational committees and in-service teacher committees seek to apply one primary criterion: Does the newly produced piece of visual education equipment under examination fit into the sequence of the course of study at the age level in the interest band and into the subject sequence? And does it bring information into the classrooms as an experience in learning which cannot be brought into the classroom through any traditional classroom methods or material means?

Let us turn again, very briefly, to analysis of the research which has been currently accomplished. While formerly educational research attempted to investigate and answer whether or not silent films and then sound films actually achieved an advantage through being added to the classroom learning situation, current research has taken an affirmation to these first two questions for granted and has turned its attention to investigating those methods through which well-conceived, well-edited, and well-prepared sound films could best be used in accomplishing higher levels of comprehension, interpretation, and understanding in the nineteen generally recognised subject areas of the secondary or high school level and the elementary school level.

Interestingly enough, the physical production of audio-visual materials of instruction is in the hands of commercial corporations. Interesting too, the ultimate estimate of the educational worth of existing materials lies largely in the hands of teacher committees, both on local, state, and national levels. This is perhaps pretty much as it should be, for through this kind of a system of doing things the strength of able producers and able teachers is both brought to bear in the attempted solution of a common problem. Our friends abroad might well say, "This is a typically American way of doing things. Why don't the two get together before films are actually produced?" The answer to this point seems to be, "This is the direction in which we are proceeding."

Within another five years experimental work, monograph material, research studies, magazine articles, and formal publications will make their appearance and contribute toward an ever increasing body of professional literature in the field of visual education. No longer does the lay public or the teacher believe that anything on celluloid constitutes a teaching film. Rather, it is being readily conceded that, just as formerly we developed many kinds and many types of printed literature, so too, in the field of visual education, we are developing such interesting teaching materials as make their appearance through editorial type film, through narrative type film, through the documentary film, and perhaps most important, through the medium of the straightforward text type or teaching film which lends itself readily as a supplementary source of information in specific subject areas which are being pursued both at the elementary, secondary, and college levels.

Visual education in the United States is rapidly becoming a growing part of the educative process. As such, it will be one of the contributing factors toward lending interest, authenticity, and a greater opportunity for retention to the formal educational experiences through which the youth, young people, and adults of the United States proceed.



POPULAR SOVIET SCIENCE FILMS

By OLEG LEONIDOV

The still shows producer Vinnitsky and one of his operators during the shooting of the sequences for "The Sunny Tribe."

The producers and cameramen are not filming props but real insects, going to all the lengths of intricate montage to do so. This makes it possible to use previous shots of actors as the background.

In another film, based on stories by the noted American author, Setton Thompson, the producer is shooting a story about mountain goats with twisted horns. The producer, Boris Dolin, is known as a producer of a film dealing particularly with the mother instinct in the animal world, and in this new film he records the four-legged actors' habits and their artful behaviour in the difficult conditions of the external struggle for existence.

The dangerous adventures experienced by Soviet scientists on an expedition in search of a mythical mercury lake is the theme of another new film *Miraculous Lake*.

Specially ordered by the Moscow Institute of Foreign Languages, producer Vladimir Schneiderov is making a popular science film *The Languages of the World*. Work has also been started on a series of shorts on human anatomy. The first of these, *Our Heart*, is being produced by Boris Altschuller.

FORTHCOMING FEATURES

Alexander Zguridi is finishing the filming of Jack London's popular story *White Fang*. An early forthcoming film by Vladimir Yurenev is *Masters of the Moscow Art Theatre*. This picture will give cinema goers a good chance to see the old guard of "art players"—Ivan Moskvina, Olga Knipper—Chekhova, Vassili Kachalov and others in excerpts from their repertoires. This is not intended as a display of impressive stage portrayals but as a screen treatment of the principles of Konstantine Stanislavsky's system of acting.

As aids to the study of geography, numerous films are being shown in secondary schools such as *In the Sands of Central Asia*, *Kiev—the Heart of the Ukraine*, *Vesuvius*, and the *Ravines*. A full length film is being made in the Tian Shan Mountains of Central Asia, depicting local fauna. The film *Artificial Aesophagus*, showing actual surgical operations by Sergei Yudin, corresponding member of the Academy of Medical Sciences of the U.S.S.R., is being made for students of the institutions of higher learning and for doctors' training courses.

Thirty-five new popular science and 150 educational films will be released in 1946.

DURING THE WAR the Moscow Studio of Technical, Scientific and Educational Films primarily served the needs of the front. It released films on how to master new kinds of arms, on field surgery, on instructing the civilian population in elementary ack-ack defence, and similar subjects. These films were widely used by the Red Army, and were excellent visual aids and helped considerably in the training of qualified soldiers and commanders.

Now the studio is working exclusively on popular science and educational films to serve the requirements of post-war audiences. This necessitates not only a change in subject but in the methods of work as well. Previously a technical film taught a lesson; now the studio's primary aim is to popularise knowledge. Its subjects are romantic science stories, adventures, biographies, and ethnographical and geographical screen sketches.

SCIENCE AND FICTION

Producers Alexander Vinnitsky and Vassili Fedorov, are working on a fictionised science film: "A Trip to the Land of Miracles." This is a fascinating story about the realm of insects' power of instinct. The script writers have aimed at blending a really scientific subject with high pictorial quality. Their leading man is a scientist who invented a miracle-working substance which can increase or diminish the size of a person at will. The scientist takes one of his own tablets and suddenly disappears. A thorough search is conducted for him for several years. Finally one of the young scientists undertakes to study the old professor's diaries. Learning the significance of the tablets left behind, the young man takes one of them and is transformed into a tiny micro-human being, in contrast with whom everything else seems of gigantic proportions. The "microhuman" starts out on his search for the professor and finds him in the land of miracles—among the insects.

THE PLANNING OF EDUCATIONAL FILMS

By D. GEORGE BENNELL

THE WAY WE LIVE

PLYMOUTH was the worst bombed city in Britain. The damage she suffered must be repaired. But her citizens are not content to patch up the ruins, they plan a new city to supersede the one they partly lost. The story of the planning is told in the film *The Way We Live*. It might have been a good thing if educational films had suffered similar damage so that we, the teacher-film makers, could cry with Dorothy Sayers "begin here".

It is true that in the years before the war, Plymouth had been getting rid of some of her slums. But the process of rebuilding a city in such a way is very slow. Plymouth is seizing her opportunity of planning to meet the needs of the functional developments that have taken place in the life of the city since it began. Modern transport, to take one example, needs roads suited to its speed and to the design of its vehicles. In other words the function of a great city is now bigger than its boots.

In educational films, too, there have been some improvements with the years, a few film slums have been cleared. But think of the enormous labour required to dust a corner here and there, to chip one or two ornaments off our Albert Memorials of educational films. We need a proper plan, one that will recognise the function of film as an aid to teaching. The time for dallying is past, we need our Abercrombie and our Plan.

A PARABLE

It is fair to say that the film makers have not understood the function of educational films as tools of exposition. In the early days the teachers said, "What are these new tools? How can we make them?" Films were made and shown, and endless experiments were carried out to test their value. Yes! Film lessons taught better than ordinary lessons. The film producers received "carte blanche"; they produced good films, beautiful tools. Later the teachers said, "The tools are not right; we cannot do a good job with them", and were told "only bad workmen blame their tools". So an amateur fashioned for himself a clumsy screwdriver, saying "This is the kind of tool I need to unscrew the shutters to let cinematography into the classroom". But they told him "See how ungainly it is; far nicer are the beautiful chisels that we have made for you, that you have broken and cast away".

Up to the present time, however, teachers have lacked the ability to express their needs in terms which the film makers could understand. Mr. J. Fairgrieve has recently restated, from the teachers' angle, some of the misconceptions in the minds of the film makers (SIGHT AND SOUND, Volume 15, No. 58) and Ken Annakin (SIGHT AND SOUND, Volume 15, No. 57) has ventured as a film director to suggest that once a film technician has become interested

in "film" he is no longer any use for school film-making. It comes to this: films for school purposes and films for public showing are two entirely different things. And no one man can make both kinds. A director may indeed graduate from one to the other if he sets out to do so, but he cannot successfully play the grasshopper. He must choose one or the other.

The reason for this is not hard to find. Film-making is an art and so is teaching. In the cinema the film has free rein, it can teach, uplift and entertain, all by its own art. It has a miscellaneous audience who want to relax, to laugh, to weep, to be interested. And it uses all the devices of its art to this end. But in the classroom the conditions are reversed. The audience is not relaxed, but under the strain of learning; the art of teaching is paramount. The teacher pleads, orders and jokes, uses all devices for the sole purpose of enabling the children to learn. And film is "cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd".

THE NEEDLE'S EYE

It is this necessary fettering that makes it so difficult for the professional to make films for schools. It is the very breadth of film technique that prevents the film maker from passing through the needle's eye into the classroom. He thinks that the classroom is narrow and wishes to make it broader. He does not realise that it is only the entrance which is narrow and that the classroom has its windows open to the world.

This narrow entrance to the classroom represents a subtle aspect of the art of teaching. Anyone can give a lecture; the lecture will be interesting or dull according to the skill of the lecturer. School lessons, however, are not lectures, even though a kind of story or lecture methods may be used at times.

There are indeed many methods used in teaching. The teacher blends them in proportions to suit each occasion. The most active and constructive of these is the heuristic approach which thus forms the largest ingredient of the modern art of teaching. With this approach, the pupil is told little directly, but is led on by questions and problems. These are chosen so that the replies are not immediately obvious although they are at the same time well within the power of the pupil. The pupil is thus placed in the attitude of a discoverer.

All educational films made so far have been based on the lecture method. This method, where the teacher presents the material in the form of a connected discourse, has no place in the classroom for children under sixteen years old, and only a limited place afterwards. This is why all efforts to make satisfactory films on these lines have failed. The next step is to make films with a heuristic approach. They will have a greater chance of success.

THE KINDS OF FILMS WE NEED

The kinds of films needed in schools may be classed as "documentary", "story", "how it works", and "heuristic". For broad aspects of education we need broad films such as *The Way We Live*, *Cyprus is an Island*, *World of Plenty*. But their place in school is linked with that of debating societies and discussion groups, that is, outside the ordinary lessons. They may well have a weekly place in the future curriculum of the schools. For the classroom itself we need films limited in scope to the requirements of the teacher and his class. Background films are attempts to fill a gap that is not really there.

Children like stories. Stories can be told excellently by films, whether they be of travel, history or discovery, and children learn well from stories. Again, children like to know "how it works". This, too, can be told by films; the children are interested and consequently they learn. But, above all, children like to discover things for themselves, not just to be told. Films should, therefore, be made for this purpose, heuristic films, that tell a little and ask questions, films that help the children to think for themselves.

This is the aspect of teaching that the film makers can never understand. The only solution is for the teachers to take matters into their own hands. The whole production of films for schools and classroom must be planned and ordered by teachers. They must set up their own film factory. In it the planners and producers must all be teachers, the film directors too must be teachers, except perhaps for a few documentary directors who have a flair for simple child-like methods and who realise that all film interests must be subordinated to the purpose of teaching.

In each subject the syllabus will be studied in order to

see where films (and filmstrips) are appropriate. Then a teacher-director will write the script in consultation with the subject expert, and the cameraman will shoot the film. The editing will be done by the teacher-director.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT?

We need a plan and we want work to begin on the planning by the end of this year. By July, 1947, we want a body of trained teacher-directors ready to begin scripting, and by September cameramen will be ready to shoot a few sample films. These should be criticised and then scrapped if unsatisfactory. By the end of 1947 a whole year's work will have been planned in outline and the first three months of it ready in detail, with shots analysed according to the time of year, the weather or location required, or according to the type of studio work needed; apparatus and sets will be ready. By July, 1948, the first batch of films should be complete. Thereafter the work will continue on a termly basis so that a new batch of films is prepared a month ahead of each term for teachers to view in advance. During this period the organisation will tackle the problem of supply of projectors, and by July, 1948, sufficient projectors will be made for each school to have at least one.

No other method is practicable, it is the task of the Visual Education Organisation about to be set up by the Ministry of Education. Will this be a living organism composed of active individuals who by their initiative and speedy, rational planning will make the films required? Or will it be a spider's web of red tape and imprisoned ideas? Let us face the way we want to live, and with Plymouth, hope—and pray.

TECHNICAL NOTES

NEW PROJECTORS

The Kalee G.K. 40 (35 mm. non-theatrical)

The G.K. 40 is the first post-war machine to be manufactured by the G.B. Kalee Organisation; the price, I understand, will be a great deal less than that of their standard equipment.

The projector is driven from one quarter H.P. capacitor-start type split phase, 50/60 cycle motor from a 110 or 220 volt input. The drive being conveyed by twin VEE-section rubberised fabric belt, protected by a detachable metal guard.

The mechanism is fitted with a two-bladed rear-shutter and is substantially and totally enclosed. The whole of the intermittent mechanism is detachable as a complete unit, with all working parts running in an oil bath. All spindles on the mechanism are arranged with oil throwers and drain ways so as to keep the oil away from the operating side of the machine. Spindles are piped to a central oil block.

The amplifier comprises two units:—

- 1 A 12-watt driver stage, which also supplies the exciter lamp current.
- 2 A 40-watt power stage coupled to the driver stage by plugs and sockets.

Two special features are, first, that the amplifiers are readily detachable from the wall rack for servicing and, second, that the driver amplifier may be used for supplying the auditorium loudspeakers in the event of a breakdown on the power stage. Provision is also made on the amplifier for gramophone and microphone input.

All metal parts are fully protected by modern technique against corrosion, and all cables, internal and external leads are PVC-type, suitable for tropical conditions.

The speakers supplied with this equipment are:—

- 1 A heavy duty permanent magnet 12" Cone speaker with a specially designed directional "VEE" baffle.
- 2 A permanent magnet high frequency speaker unit with multi-cellular horn.

A 7' high triangular tower, which requires 4' 1" clearance behind the screen, is supplied to carry the two speaker units. The equipment is supplied with either AC or DC arcs and Kalee bloomed lenses.

J.T.

The E.D.P. Strip Projector

Designed to operate either on alternating or direct current, the E.D.P. Projector is fitted with a built-in transformer, reducing standard A.C. main voltage to 12 volts. Thus the projector will operate from A.C. or D.C. mains (changing the lamp when operating from D.C.), or directly from a 12-volt car battery where no mains are available or in an emergency.

Two focusing lenses are housed in an arm of the projector casing in front of the gate. The projector is masked for 24 by 18 mm. and 36 by 24 mm. (single and double) frames. Two metal masks are provided for this. A slide carrier is also provided for 2 in. slides.

The projector, which is manufactured by British Industrial Films, is housed in a neat case which is secured to the base by two clip fasteners; a spring-loaded carrying handle is fixed to the top and a useful drawer built in to the rear of the projector base to carry the slide carrier, spare lamp, leads, etc. The whole machine is very attractive in appearance and is sold at a reasonable price.

NOTES AND NEWS

The Film Society movement at home and abroad—Brief book reviews—A new Projector

NEW ZEALAND

There were several film societies established in New Zealand about 1930, but they fairly soon went out of existence, largely because of the difficulties of obtaining supplies of 35 mm. film from the trade. With the end of the war, however, and the easy accessibility now of 16 mm., the film society movement in the Dominion has been revived and is spreading rapidly. It would seem to have much greater chances of permanent success than before. First in the field was the Wellington Film Institute (in the capital city), which was launched at the end of 1945 as "an association of people who are interested in the motion-picture as art, entertainment, and education, and whose object is to encourage higher public standards in the film and protect the interests of the 'consumer' (i.e., the average picturegoer)". Its model, so far as possible, has been the British Film Institute. After less than a year of life, it now has a membership of 300, gives regular screenings of documentaries and other films not normally shown in the commercial cinemas, conducts groups specially interested in criticism, production, censorship, films for children, and scientific films, and also produces a regular monthly bulletin containing, in particular, candid reviews of current entertainment at the commercial cinemas. The Auckland Film Society, which was started a little later, operates on very similar lines and has a membership of about 200. Its peak activity to date has been to sponsor a screening of a 35 mm. copy of *Metropolis* unearthed in Auckland. A film institute is now also under way in Dunedin; steps are being taken to form one in Christchurch; and others are already in operation in several of the smaller centres. It is likely that the coming year will see a big increase in their number.

The film trade has so far proved unco-operative, refusing to hire even old films to the societies; but they are able to draw on several fairly well stocked 16 mm. libraries (particularly the N.Z. National Film Library, run by the Education Department) for documentary programmes. In addition, however, the Wellington Film Institute has been able, through the good offices of the U.K. High Commissioner in New Zealand, and particularly of the British Film Institute, to purchase prints of silent classics from the British National Film Library. Already it has received copies of *Battleship Potemkin*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *The Last Laugh*. The N.Z. National Film Library and several of the other societies are securing similar films from the same source. This process is likely to continue; the films will probably

all eventually go into the central library, so that in this way the film society movement will be largely instrumental in building up a worthwhile collection of films not previously available in the Dominion.

It should also be mentioned that all the societies are fairly closely linked with the official adult education movement; and that it is likely that, while remaining autonomous, they will before long form some sort of Dominion-wide federation. Among the many advantages to be derived from such a move would be that of being able, when required, to present a common front on any public issues concerning the motion-picture.

CEYLON

Since its formation in September, 1945, the Colombo Film Society, has endeavoured to provide members and their guests with a monthly performance.

Seven monthly shows were held at the Elphinstone cinema on Sunday mornings: *Battle of China*, *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, and a programme of shorts were some of the outstanding films shown.

In April this year no suitable film could be obtained, and with the help of the British Film Institute a copy of *Potemkin* was loaned from the National Film Library. Had this not been possible this Society would have been forced to stop its activities then.

Potemkin was followed by *Dr. Caligari*, and both these films were shown at the Art Gallery, Colombo, to enthusiastic audiences. The performance of *Dr. Caligari* closed a successful year of the Society's existence.

At one performance of *Potemkin*, the members of the Colombo Harbour Workers' Union attended it *en bloc*, and it was perhaps the most successful screening of *Potemkin* we have had in Colombo. Ninety per cent. of the workers do not know English; the show was introduced by a talk in Sinhalese and Tamil, and the sub-titles were translated orally into the two languages. But this was not necessary at all!

Many others besides workers are asking for more performances of *Potemkin*, not only in Colombo but also in "up-country" towns like Kandy and Badulla.

We propose to buy our own sub-standard equipment this year, and we also hope that Mr. Keith Bean's scheme for an international co-operative film society (in the summer number of *SIGHT AND SOUND*) will soon be made to work.

Bombay Film Society

The above Society was started in October, 1942, and in spite of early difficulties due to war conditions, has been steadily prospering. Films have been limited to those available in India, but a number of interesting features have been shown, including *Citizen Kane*, *La Charette Fantome*, *Professor Mamlock*, *Ivan the Terrible* and *The Childhood of Maxim Gorki*. Other activities have included discussions, lectures, the establishment of a film book library and an effort—not yet completed—to compile a composite film showing the development of the Indian film. The Hon. Secretary is Captain F. Berko, 73, Warden Road, Bombay.

Silver Jubilee in Sweden

The Silver Jubilee of the Swiss Society for the Swiss School and People's Cinema, Central Institute for the film, is being celebrated this year. Known best as the S.S.U.K., the Institute has given 30,000 cinema shows by means of mobile units in country districts and has taken the lead in founding the 25 Cultural Film Guilds (roughly equivalent to our Film Societies) which have already given 2,300 shows to over one million people.

In addition, the S.S.U.K. is interested in the educational film and, through the School Film Trust in Berne, has formed a library of educational films with printed commentaries and teaching notes in French and German.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

Simplified Stereoscopic Photography, by C. W. Wilman. (Percival Marshall, 6s.).

A good book for the amateur, containing a number of ideas on how to adapt various types of still cameras for stereoscopic work.

The Film and International Relations: a paper delivered to the Workers' Film Association, September 26th, 1945, by Sidney L. Bernstein.

In this interesting paper Mr. Bernstein draws attention to the extraordinarily strong influence of the film upon public opinion. His clear sighted statement comes from someone of wide and varied experience. If it can now be shown that the free and honest film is acceptable in every country, the problems which hinder its production may be solved.

Films an Alternative to Rank: an analysis of power and policy in the British Film Industry. (Socialist Book Centre, 1946, 2s.).

An indictment of the "monopolistic tendencies" of the British Film Industry which is interesting but open to argument.

Bernard Shaw Among the Innocents, by F. W. Robson and M. M. Robson. (Sydneyan Society, 1945. 1s. 6d.).

This pamphlet contains a tirade against Bernard Shaw, with special reference to *Cæsar and Cleopatra*, so acrimonious that it seems as if the authors must have rather lost their sense of proportion. It is legitimate to take exception to views expressed in such works as "An Intelligent Woman's Guide", for such purport to be Shaw's studied opinion. To take for granted,

however, that all the words of the protagonists in an imaginative creation such as *Cæsar and Cleopatra* are also the views of the author or that their influence is necessarily deleterious seems to be going rather far. It is difficult to see why the unusual length of time taken to film *Cæsar and Cleopatra* should be attributed to the unsuitability of the play as a film, when there are so many other possible reasons in an elaborate technicolour production. Although the authors compare their pamphlet to David and the laudatory biographies of Shaw by Chesterton and many others to Goliath, we still feel that there is something to be said for Shaw. (Incidentally the authors seem to extol the American film at the expense of the British on page 23, although on page 11 they have a down on Shaw for decrying what is British.)

Around Cinemas, by James Agate. (Home and Van Thal, 1946. 15s.).

Film reviews written by Mr. Agate between October, 1921, and March, 1945. Stimulating, although often off the subject, and an interesting review of progress and changes.

Prater Violet, by Christopher Isherwood. (Methuen, 1946. 5s.).

This is a delineation of the background to the production of an imaginary British film, of the environment and the work which this immense undertaking involves and of the personalities, important and unimportant, who participate in it, all conveyed through the mind of an artist, of someone of established literary prestige. The combination of such a subject and such an author is new and interesting. It is almost possible to gauge from this delineation the typical and the individual and hence to form a fairly clear idea of what goes to the making of any film. This short novel is, in its way, a masterpiece.

Teaching With Films, by George H. Fern and Eldon Robbins. (Milwaukee, Bruce Publishing Co., 1946. 1 dollar 75 cents).

A short, plentifully illustrated book on films as aids in teaching.

The Hays Office, by Raymond Moley. (New York, Bobbs Merrill, 1945).

An account of the work of the Hays Office.

Twenty Best Film Plays, Best Film Plays of 1943-44, both edited by John Gassner and Dudley Nichols. (New York, Crown Publications, 1943, 1945).

The first contains twenty, the second ten complete scenarios of American films.

New Publication

A journal entirely devoted to the Christian aspects of the film has long been needed. "Christian Screen", the organ of the Christian Film Council, attempts to fill this gap. The first number contains articles on the Children and the Film by Captain Paul Bennett, V.C., M.C., and on the Spiritual Possibilities of Film by Andrew Buchanan, among many others. The lack of illustrations is a handicap, but no doubt this will be rectified as soon as the difficulties inherent at the present time in launching a new publication have been overcome.

THE FILM SOCIETIES

Norwich Film Society

In addition to our usual 35 mm. programmes at the Regal Cinema, the Fifth Session included three programmes of 16 mm. films at the Stuart Hall, designed to illustrate the early history of the film. February 7th: *Nanook of the North*, *Beginnings of the Cinema*; February 28th: *Waxworks*, *The Lumiere Programme*; March 7th: *The Battleship 'Potemkin'*, the scything sequence from *The General Line*, *Edgar Allan Poe*, *Simple Charity*. Mr. Gerald Cockshott introduced the programmes.

On March 9th an exhibition of films for specialist audiences was presented at the Stuart Hall by the Ministry of Information in conjunction with the Norfolk Education Committee and the Film Society. The following films were selected by the Ministry: *Your Children's Eyes*, *Factors of Soil Fertility*, *It Might be You*, *Father and Son*.

The Society has sponsored two public lectures. Mr. Paul Rotha, who was to have lectured on "The Film in Real Life" at the Regal Cinema on March 31st, had to cancel his visit, but Mr. Ken Cameron, at twenty-four hours' notice, kindly saved the situation for us. His subject was "Sound in Films" (with special reference to documentary). *Land of Promise* and *Listen to Britain* were shown. Mr. Arnold Marle, who played the part of Dirk Brak in *Dood Water*, lectured on May 30th at the Stuart Hall on the production of this film. *Drifters* and *Rain* were shown on the same occasion.

The programmes of the Seventh Session are as follows: September 15th: *Maskerade*, *Fear and Peter Brown*; October 20th: *La Fin du jour*, *The Telltale Heart*, *Early One Morning*; November 17th: *Das Testament von Dr. Mabuse*, *Chinesische Nachtigall*. In addition the following 16 mm. programmes will be given: November 7th: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Voyage Across the Impossible*; November 28th: *Turksib*, *Marcus Lycinius*; December 12th: *The White Hell of Pitz-Palu*.

The Dunfermline and West Fife Film Society

The new season opened on 25th September when, in Carnegie Hall, Mr. Joseph Macleod addressed a public meeting on the subject of the new Scottish film industry. Films in the supporting programme included *A Diary for Timothy*, *Cornish Valley* and *A Farm is Reclaimed*. Sunday performances on 35 mm. have been arranged for the second Sunday of each month, beginning on 13th October. The feature films will be *The Blue Angel*, *Une Femme Disparait*, *Fantasia*, *General Suworov*, *La Fin du Jour* and *Maskerade*. Clubrooms have been secured in the Abbot House, one of the oldest buildings in Dunfermline, and a syllabus of talks and discussions is being prepared. The nucleus of a small library has been formed, and this will be available to members.

Edinburgh Film Guild

Operating from its new premises at Film House (6-8, Hill Street, Edinburgh, 2), the Edinburgh Film Guild opens its 17th season on October 20th. Ten performances will be given on Sunday afternoons and evenings in the Caley Picture House, and feature films booked include *Une Femme Disparait*, *Frenzy*, *Land of Promise* and *Fric-Frac*.

Following the success of last season's History of the Cinema courses, a further festival of famous films has been arranged. The performances will be held in the new Gateway Theatre in Leith Walk on two evenings a fortnight over the season. The films will include *The Birth of a Nation*, *The Last Laugh*, *Thy Soul Shall Bear Witness*, *Berlin, M*, *Blackmail* and *Joan of Arc*.

The complete reconstruction of the Guild's new premises has been delayed, but when they are ready courses on film appreciation and sub-standard film projection will be organised.

The Everyman Film Society

The Everyman Film Society was formed last November, to teach people how films are made, to give them a chance to make films (on 16 mm.), and to try to create a more critical attitude towards films in general.

The success of the first season was due mainly to the speakers—Anthony Asquith, Frank Rodker, Brian Sewell, Basil Wright, and Geoffrey Bell—who showed considerable interest in the aims and activities of the Society. Film shows, discussions, and visits to film studios completed the programme. Now, three films are being made by the members. One in a theatre showing what happens just before the curtain rises (the Unity Theatre is co-operating in this); the second in the London Docks; and the third, experimenting on the well-worn theme of Boy meets Girl.

The second season starts in November, and it is hoped to continue on the same lines as before.

Wallsend Film Society

This Society started its activities last Spring, when, among others, the following films were shown: *Alexander Nevsky*, *Citizen Kane*, *La Bête Humaine* and *La Grande Illusion*. Shorts included Disney's *Reason and Emotion*.

The Society is making a special effort to appeal to the younger generation and has special subscription rates for youth clubs. The new season began in October and the programme includes *Rainbow Village*, *L'Homme Qui Cherissait la Vérité* and *Testament of Dr. Mabuse*.

The Secretary is Mr. Storkdale, "Evening Chronicle" office, Station Road, Wallsend.

North London Film Society

The Society (formerly the Hornsey Film Society) had its inaugural season during February-June, 1946, when we showed many famous classics, including *Caligari*, *M*, *Metropolis*, *Song of Ceylon*, *Film and Reality*, and the *Blue Angel*.

Our new season will open at the Hornsey Central Library on Sunday, October 6th at 3 p.m., and will continue on alternate Sundays. The programme includes *Birth of a Nation*, *The Italian Straw Hat*, *End of St. Petersburg*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *Edge of the World*, and *Destry Rides Again*, supported by famous documentaries and interest films.

We shall be glad to welcome new members. Councillor Colin Macphee, Chairman of the Society, will be pleased to answer any inquiries. His address is 28, Collingwood Avenue, London, N.10 (TUD 3085). He will also be pleased to exchange programmes with other societies.

The Society has an active production side, under Mr. Philip Holbrook and Mr. Stanley Newman, and a 16-mm. film dealing with the new town at Stevenage is now being shot. It is hoped to have the film ready for showing by Christmas.

We have had considerable support from Hornsey Borough Council, who have done their best to secure us suitable premises. We hope to run Film Brains Trusts and other activities in the new season.

Carlisle W.E.A. Film Society

The Society ended its first season on May 19th with the film *Grapes of Wrath*. During the season there have been nine standard film shows, three sub-standard, and one lecture. It is regretted that the membership obtained at the beginning of the season was not maintained throughout, the number of members at the end being 181.

At the First Annual General Meeting of the Society, held on June 24th, the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. T. L. MacDonald, reported an adverse balance for the year. The Committee and Officers were re-elected, and it was decided that eight monthly shows be arranged for the coming season.

The opening show was on September 15th, when the programme included *Nous Les Gosses*, *Cyprus Is An Island* and one of the Canadian Folk Song series.

Membership of the Society is open not only to members of the W.E.A. but to the general public also. Enquiries for membership will be welcomed by the Hon. Secretary, A. Worley, Westgarth, Brisco, Carlisle.

The Cambridge Film Society

The Season 1945-6 has been one of the fullest and most satisfying the Society has experienced. Our membership is over a thousand, and in the second half of the season, from January to March, we found ourselves presenting regularly two shows a week—each of which was repeated at least once.

Our most successful film was *The Birth of a Nation*, which was shown three times, with a record accompaniment specially

arranged by Frederick Curzon and Rodney Ackland.

Of note in our feature programmes at the Arts Theatre was the premiere of Paul Rotha's *Land of Promise*, which was attended by Mr. Rotha and his assistant director, who discussed the making of the film and the film's implications.

On 16 mm. we have revived numerous silent classics.

Of particular interest are the series of specialised shows on a certain aspect of the cinema which are given three or four times a season. Arthur Elton has introduced a programme on "The Documentary", the President, Basil Wright, on "The Work and Influence of John Grierson", and the Vice-President, J. D. Fage, on "Silent Film Technique, 1895-1925".

Speakers have included Ralph Bond on the "Structure of the British Film Industry", Rodney Ackland, who gave an introduction to the work of D. W. Griffith, Dilys Powell on "The Filming of Books and Plays" and William Alwyn on "Film Music".

The Society's three production units have been very active. The first, which took as its subject the return of the ex-service man to University life, has nearly completed shooting its material; the second is engaged upon a film on crystallographic research for academic use, while the third, our "experimental unit", has so far confined its attentions to film-writing, and has produced half-a-dozen shooting scripts, the best of which will be shot next season.

Visitors from other film societies and similar bodies are always warmly welcomed at the Society's shows, notice of which will be sent in advance to every society.

The Planet Film Society

This newly-formed Society has taken over the assets of the pre-war Planet Amateur Film Society, and following a reunion meeting of old members returned from the Forces, and the subsequent trial period of operating on new lines, the committee has been prompted to follow up its early success by preparing quite a heavy programme for the 1946-47 season which commenced in September.

The Society is divided into two sections, the main one of which has as its object the presentation of monthly programmes on Sunday evenings at Winchmore Hill, N.21, of film appreciation programmes on 16 mm. The September meeting covered modern documentaries, the October meeting dealt with French feature films and the November and December shows will cover amateur films and silent classics respectively.

The substandard film production section of the Society aims to promote the making of more and better amateur films on—preferably—16 mm. stock. Several members are already making short films, and it is hoped that there will be sufficient entries to warrant a film competition next year.

This Society believes that these two activities are so closely allied that each is dependant upon the other for a deeper understanding. There are vacancies for new members who should write for details to the Hon. Secretary: Mr. H. Roger Dale, 48, Langbourne Mansions, Highgate, N.6.

Merseyside Film Institute Society

At the close of the 1945-46 season, the Society's membership was 1,300—the highest number to be reached during any period whilst the subscription has been in force since the inception of the organisation in 1933.

During the summer vacation the Annual General Meeting was held, when Mr. W. Lyon Blease was re-elected chairman, Mr. T. F. Wilson, Hon. Secretary, and Mr. A. C. Harrison, Hon. Treasurer, and a joint Film Show with the Educational Committee of the Liverpool Co-operative Society took place in September, when the feature film was *Millions Like Us*.

Arrangements have been made for the new season including the monthly Film Shows at the Philharmonic Hall on the second Thursday, monthly repertory shows at the Tatler News Theatre on Sunday afternoons and monthly lectures or 16 mm. shows at the Rushworth Hall. Films already booked are *Une Femme Disparait*, *Artamonov and Sons* and *Fric Frac*. The first speaker will be Mr. John Fernald, the new producer at the Liverpool Playhouse.

With the increasing supply of available films, some good lectures and an enthusiastic and increasing membership, the Society should enjoy one of its best seasons in 1946-47.

Inverness Film Society

The Society will give six performances during season 1946-47 in the Palace Cinema, commencing 13th October with *La Fin du Jour*. The Hon. Secretary is R. R. MacEwen, Old National Bank Buildings.

A series of lectures and discussions is also being arranged.

New Historical Films

Three new historical films in 16 mm. Kodachrome are now in production by Gateway Film Productions. This new enterprise, an offshoot of the old Planet Film Society, comprises a practising schoolmaster, C. W. Bending, History Master at Cawood Senior School, Middlesex, who supervises production from first scenario to final editing and presentation, Hugh Baddeley who directs and edits, John Ganderson who covers most of the photographic work, L. F. Minter responsible for artwork, titles, charts, diagrams, animated sequences, etc., and F. H. Wright, secretary and general factotum.

The first of the three historical subjects, *The House In Which You Live*, tells the story of the development of the English dwelling house, and is now being edited. Special sectional models as well as a complete 17th century street were constructed by Stanley H. Smith, A.R.I.B.A., and dozens of the later standing examples have been recorded on film.

Georgian Background and *Elizabethan England* are purely period films illustrating dress, furniture, travel, industries, literature art, music, etc., of those times, and shooting is now almost completed for the first named.

All three will be in sound and silent (not mute) versions.

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The Education Division
G.B. INSTRUCTIONAL LTD.
21, Soho Square, London, W.1.

Post-Scriptum.—Inquiries on the supply, operation and maintenance of film equipment (e.g. on the 16mm. GeBescope and the G.B. Film Strip Projector) should be sent to G.B. Equipments, Ltd., Film House, Wardour Street, London, W.1.